

Official Report of the  
One Hundred Fifty-ninth  
Annual General

# CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle  
Salt Lake City, Utah

**April 1 and 2, 1989**



Official Report  
of the  
One Hundred Fifty-ninth  
Annual General Conference

of  
The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
April 1 and 2, 1989

Published by  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Copyright © 1989 Corporation of the President  
of  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

All Rights Reserved  
Printed in the United States of America

# THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 159th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 1, 1989, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 1 and 2, 1989. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 1, 1989, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

## General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

*The First Presidency:* Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson

*The Council of the Twelve:* Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott

*The Presidency of the Seventy:* Dean L. Larsen, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant

Bangerter, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, James M. Paramore, and J. Richard Clarke

*The First Quorum of the Seventy:* Angel Abrea, Carlos E. Asay, William R. Bradford, Ted E. Brewerton, Victor L. Brown, Theodore M. Burton, F. Enzo Busche, John K. Carmack, Joe J. Christensen, Gene R. Cook, Derek A. Cuthbert, Jacob de Jager, Royden G. Derrick, Charles Didier, Loren C. Dunn, Paul H. Dunn, Vaughn J. Featherstone, J. Thomas Fyans, Jack H. Goasling, John H. Groberg, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, F. Burton Howard, Marlin K. Jensen, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Adney Y. Komatsu, George P. Lee, H. Burke Peterson, Rex D. Pinegar, Ronald E. Poelman, Hartman Rector, Jr., Rex C. Reeve, Sr., Hans B. Ringger, Robert L. Simpson, and Robert E. Wells

*The Second Quorum of the Seventy:* Carlos H. Amado, H. Verlan Andersen, Benjamin B. Banks, Monte J. Brough, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, George I. Cannon, Albert Choules, Jr., Spencer J. Condie, Lloyd P. George, Francis M. Gibbons, F. Melvin Hammond, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, George R. Hill III, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, F. Arthur Kay, L. Lionel Kendrick, John R. Lasater, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, Douglas J. Martin, Gerald E. Melchin, Alexander B. Morrison, Spencer H. Osborn, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Gardner H. Russell, Robert E. Sackley, Douglas H. Smith, John Sonnenberg, Philip T. Sonntag, Lynn A. Sorensen, Russell C. Taylor, and Horacio A. Tenorio<sup>1</sup>

*The Presiding Bishopric:* Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace

*General Authorities Emeritus:* Joseph Anderson, Bernard P. Brockbank, Sterling W. Sill, and Eldred G. Smith<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Elders Keith W. Wilcox and John H. Vandenberg were excused due to ill health.

### Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards,

and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

## FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 159th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 1, 1989, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus, with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

Before the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise" without announcement.

President Monson then made the following remarks:

### President Thomas S. Monson

Good morning. We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 159th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Robert L. Simpson and George R. Hill III are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except Elders David B. Haight, Keith W. Wilcox, and John H. Vandenberg, who are excused. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. And we extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present here with us this morning.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise." The chorus will now favor us with "Shout the Glad Tidings."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

---

The chorus sang "Shout the Glad Tidings."

Elder Carlos E. Asay offered the invocation.

---

### President Monson

At the request of President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will read to us a message prepared by President Benson.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

(Read by President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency)

### President Hinckley

We are grateful for President Benson's presence. He honors us. We love him, as we know he loves us. I shall now read the message which he has prepared for the opening of this conference.

### President Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, I rejoice to be with you in another glorious general conference of the Church. How grateful I am for the love, prayers, and service of the devoted members of the Church throughout the world.

May I commend you faithful Saints who are striving to flood the earth and your lives with the Book of Mormon. Not only must we move forward in a monumental manner more copies of the Book of Mormon, but we must move boldly forward into our own lives and throughout the earth more of its marvelous messages.

This sacred volume was written for us—for our day. Its scriptures are to be likened unto ourselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23).

### The sin of pride

The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that the Book of Mormon is the "record of a fallen people" (D&C 20:9). Why did they fall? This is one of the major messages of the Book of Mormon. Mormon gives the answer in the closing chapters of the book in these words: "Behold, the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction" (Moroni 8:27). And then, lest we miss that momentous Book of Mormon message from that fallen people, the Lord warns us in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old" (D&C 38:39).

I earnestly seek an interest in your faith and prayers as I strive to bring forth light on this Book of Mormon message—the sin of pride. This message has been weighing heavily on my soul for some time. I know the Lord wants this message delivered now.

### "Beware of pride"

In the premortal council, it was pride that felled Lucifer, "a son of the morning" (2 Nephi 24:12–15; see also D&C 76:25–27; Moses 4:3). At the end of this world, when God cleanses the earth by fire, the proud will be burned as stubble and the meek shall inherit the earth (see 3 Nephi 12:5, 25:1; D&C 29:9; Joseph Smith—History 1:37; Malachi 4:1).

Three times in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord uses the phrase "beware of pride," including a warning to the second elder of the Church, Oliver Cowdery, and to Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet (D&C 23:1; see also D&C 25:14; 38:39).

### God's definition of pride

Pride is a very misunderstood sin, and many are sinning in ignorance (see Mosiah 3:11; 3 Nephi 6:18). In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride—it is always considered a sin. Therefore, no matter how the world uses the term, we must understand how God uses the term so we can understand the language of holy writ and profit thereby (see 2 Nephi 4:15; Mosiah 1:3–7; Alma 5:61).

Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing.

The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. *Enmity* means "hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition." It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us.

## Enmity toward God

Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God's. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of "my will and not thine be done." As Paul said, they "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Philippians 2:21).

Our will in competition to God's will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled (see Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:30).

The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives (see Helaman 12:6). They pit their perceptions of truth against God's great knowledge, their abilities versus God's priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works.

Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as rebellion, hard-heartedness, stiff-neckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren't interested in changing their opinions to agree with God's.

## Enmity toward fellowmen

Another major portion of this very prevalent sin of pride is enmity toward our fellowmen. We are tempted daily to elevate ourselves above others and diminish them (see Helaman 6:17; D&C 58:41).

The proud make every man their adversary by pitting their intellects, opinions, works, wealth, talents, or any other worldly measuring device against others. In the words of C. S. Lewis: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. . . . It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone" (*Mere Christianity* [New York: Macmillan, 1952], pp. 109–10).

In the pre-earthly council, Lucifer placed his proposal in competition with the Father's plan as advocated by Jesus Christ (see Moses 4:1–3). He wished to be honored above all others (see 2 Nephi

24:13). In short, his prideful desire was to dethrone God (see D&C 29:36; 76:28).

## Consequences of pride

The scriptures abound with evidences of the severe consequences of the sin of pride to individuals, groups, cities, and nations. "Pride goeth before destruction" (Proverbs 16:18). It destroyed the Nephite nation and the city of Sodom (see Moroni 8:27; Ezekiel 16:49–50).

It was through pride that Christ was crucified. The Pharisees were wroth because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, which was a threat to their position, and so they plotted His death (see John 11:53).

Saul became an enemy to David through pride. He was jealous because the crowds of Israelite women were singing that "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 18:7; see also 18:6, 8).

The proud stand more in fear of men's judgment than of God's judgment (see D&C 3:6–7; 30:1–2; 60:2). "What will men think of me?" weighs heavier than "What will God think of me?"

King Noah was about to free the prophet Abinadi, but an appeal to his pride by his wicked priests sent Abinadi to the flames (see Mosiah 17:11–12). Herod sorrowed at the request of his wife to behead John the Baptist. But his prideful desire to look good to "them which sat with him at meat" caused him to kill John (Matthew 14:9; see also Mark 6:26).

Fear of men's judgment manifests itself in competition for men's approval. The proud love "the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42–43). Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said He did "always those things" that pleased God (John 8:29). Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to elevate ourselves above our brother and outdo another?

Some prideful people are not so concerned as to whether their wages meet their needs as they are that their wages are more than someone else's. Their reward is being a cut above the rest. This is the enmity of pride.



When pride has a hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedoms to the bondage of men's judgment. The world shouts louder than the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. The reasoning of men overrides the revelations of God, and the proud let go of the iron rod (see 1 Nephi 8:19–28; 11:25; 15:23–24).

### Manifestations of pride

Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves. Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down at the rest of us (see 2 Nephi 9:42). There is, however, a far more common ailment among us—and that is pride from the bottom looking up. It is manifest in so many ways, such as faultfinding, gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous.

Disobedience is essentially a prideful power struggle against someone in authority over us. It can be a parent, a priesthood leader, a teacher, or ultimately God. A proud person hates the fact that someone is above him. He thinks this lowers his position.

Selfishness is one of the more common faces of pride. "How everything affects me" is the center of all that matters—self-conceit, self-pity, worldly self-fulfillment, self-gratification, and self-seeking.

Pride results in secret combinations which are built up to get power, gain, and glory of the world (see Helaman 7:5; Ether 8:9, 16, 22–23; Moses 5:31). This fruit of the sin of pride, namely secret combinations, brought down both the Jaredite and the Nephite civilizations and has been and will yet be the cause of the fall of many nations (see Ether 8:18–25).

Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous domination, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride.

Contention in our families drives the Spirit of the Lord away. It also drives many of our family members away. Contention ranges from a hostile spoken word to worldwide conflicts. The scriptures tell us that "only by pride cometh contention" (Proverbs 13:10; see also Proverbs 28:25).

The scriptures testify that the proud are easily offended and hold grudges (see 1 Nephi 16:1–3). They withhold forgiveness to keep another in their debt and to justify their injured feelings.

The proud do not receive counsel or correction easily (see Proverbs 15:10; Amos 5:10). Defensiveness is used by them to justify and rationalize their frailties and failures (see Matthew 3:9; John 6:30–59).

The proud depend upon the world to tell them whether they have value or not. Their self-esteem is determined by where they are judged to be on the ladders of worldly success. They feel worthwhile as individuals if the numbers beneath them in achievement, talent, beauty, or intellect are large enough. Pride is ugly. It says, "If you succeed, I am a failure."

If we love God, do His will, and fear His judgment more than men's, we will have self-esteem.

### "A damning sin"

Pride is a damning sin in the true sense of that word. It limits or stops progression (see Alma 12:10–11). The proud are not easily taught (see 1 Nephi 15:3, 7–11). They won't change their minds to accept truths, because to do so implies they have been wrong.

Pride adversely affects all our relationships—our relationship with God and His servants, between husband and wife, parent and child, employer and employee, teacher and student, and all mankind. Our degree of pride determines how we treat our God and our brothers and sisters. Christ wants to lift us to where He is. Do we desire to do the same for others?

Pride fades our feelings of sonship to God and brotherhood to man. It separates and divides us by "ranks," according to our "riches" and our "chances for learn-

ing" (3 Nephi 6:12). Unity is impossible for a proud people, and unless we are one we are not the Lord's (see Mosiah 18:21; D&C 38:27; 105:2-4; Moses 7:18).

### The cost of pride

Think of what pride has cost us in the past and what it is now costing us in our own lives, our families, and the Church.

Think of the repentance that could take place with lives changed, marriages preserved, and homes strengthened, if pride did not keep us from confessing our sins and forsaking them (see D&C 58:43).

Think of the many who are less-active members of the Church because they were offended and their pride will not allow them to forgive or fully sup at the Lord's table.

Think of the tens of thousands of additional young men and couples who could be on missions except for the pride that keeps them from yielding their hearts unto God (see Alma 10:6; Helaman 3:34-35).

Think how temple work would increase if the time spent in this godly service were more important than the many prideful pursuits that compete for our time.

### The universal sin

Pride affects all of us at various times and in various degrees. Now you can see why the building in Lehi's dream that represents the pride of the world was large and spacious and great was the multitude that did enter into it (see 1 Nephi 8:26, 33; 11:35-36).

Pride is the universal sin, the great vice. Yes, pride *is* the universal sin, the great vice.

### Humility: the antidote for pride

The antidote for pride is humility — meekness, submissiveness (see Alma 7:23). It is the broken heart and contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:20; 12:19; D&C

20:37; 59:8; Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2). As Rudyard Kipling put it so well:

The tumult and the shouting dies;  
The captains and the kings depart.  
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart.  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget, lest we forget.\*  
("God of Our Fathers, Known of  
Old," *Hymns*, no. 80)

### Choose to be humble

God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. Alma said, "Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble" (Alma 32:16).

Let us choose to be humble.

We can choose to humble ourselves by conquering enmity toward our brothers and sisters, esteeming them as ourselves, and lifting them as high or higher than we are (see D&C 38:24; 81:5; 84:106).

We can choose to humble ourselves by receiving counsel and chastisement (see Jacob 4:10; Helaman 15:3; D&C 63:55; 101:4-5; 108:1; 124:61, 84; 136:31; Proverbs 9:8).

We can choose to humble ourselves by forgiving those who have offended us (see 3 Nephi 13:11, 14; D&C 64:10).

We can choose to humble ourselves by rendering selfless service (see Mosiah 2:16-17).

We can choose to humble ourselves by going on missions and preaching the word that can humble others (see Alma 4:19; 31:5; 48:20).

We can choose to humble ourselves by getting to the temple more frequently.

We can choose to humble ourselves by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God (see D&C 58:43; Mosiah 27:25-26; Alma 5:7-14, 49).

We can choose to humble ourselves by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives (see 3 Nephi 11:11; 13:33; Moroni 10:32).

Let us choose to be humble. We can do it. I know we can.

## The great stumbling block to Zion

My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion. It was essentially the sin of pride that kept us from establishing Zion in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was the same sin of pride that brought consecration to an end among the Nephites (see 4 Nephi 1:24–25).

Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion. I repeat: Pride *is* the great stumbling block to Zion.

We must cleanse the inner vessel by conquering pride (see Alma 6:2–4; Matthew 23:25–26).

We must yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,” put off the prideful “natural man,” become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord,” and become “as a child, submissive, meek,

humble” (Mosiah 3:19; see also Alma 13:28).

That we may do so and go on to fulfill our divine destiny is my fervent prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

---

The chorus sang “How Gentle God’s Commands” without announcement.

---

## President Monson

It has been our privilege to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, read the opening address of President Ezra Taft Benson, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing “How Gentle God’s Commands.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

## Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren and sisters, we have been inspired by this outstanding and meaningful message of our prophet, seer, and revelator. In addition, this beautiful singing of our young people has been enjoyed by all of us.

### Thrive in the heat of adversity

In a hot, dry, desert area of north-west Mexico, farmers plant seeds and grow varieties of corn and beans that are unusually hardy and drought resistant. These varieties survive and flourish in a harsh climate where other plants would wither and die. One of these plants is the white tepary bean. Its seed will sprout and the plant will grow even when very little rain falls. It sends its roots as deep as six feet into the rocky, sandy earth to find the moisture it needs. It can flower and fruit in the 115-degree (Fahrenheit) desert temperatures with only one yearly rainfall. Its foliage remains remarkably green, with little irrigation, even in the heat of mid-July. (See Gary Paul Nabhan, “Seeds of

Renewal,” *World Monitor*, Jan. 1989, pp. 17–20).

Perhaps members of the Church could emulate the example of these hardy, sturdy plants. We should send our roots deep into the soil of the gospel. We should grow, flourish, flower, and bear good fruit in abundance despite the evil, temptation, or criticism we might encounter. We should learn to thrive in the heat of adversity.

Our pioneer ancestors survived and grew stronger in the face of extreme trials and afflictions and made the desert blossom as a rose. My own great-grandfather suffered so much from asthma that he had to walk a mile or two behind the covered wagons crossing the plains to avoid the dust. However, he always arrived at his destination and did his share of the work.

Our challenges today are different from those of our ancestors. Many of them lived lives of poverty and hardship; some among us, however, are affluent and complacent. Wealth, abundance, and easy living do not help us develop the

ability to flourish when faced with the rigors and reversals of life. Rather than seeking ease, we must plant, cultivate, and nourish within ourselves the seeds that will enable us to withstand the winds and heat of temptation, sin, and evil and that will help us live successful, happy, and pure lives. Let us consider a few such seeds.

### **Plant and nurture seeds of faith**

First, we should plant and nurture the seed of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. We each should develop the faith of Nephi to do the things the Lord has commanded (see 1 Nephi 3:7), knowing that all commandments are given for our good. Nephi expressed his faith in these words: "If it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them" (1 Nephi 17:3). When the Lord instructed him to build a ship, his brothers called him a fool to think he could do it. He told them: "If God had commanded me to do all things I could do them. If he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth" (17:50).

Next, let us nurture the seed of faith which gives us the courage to follow the prophets. Today's prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, is the Lord's spokesman to mankind at this time. We need the wisdom and the courage to accept his inspired counsel with gratitude and conform our lives to it because "whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38). The revelation given to President Benson's first predecessor, Joseph Smith, on the day the Church was organized applies to Church members today:

"The church . . . shalt give heed unto all his [the Prophet's] words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, . . .

"For his word shall ye receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith" (D&C 21:4-5).

I am sure the Lord is pleased with the response of Church members to President Benson's emphasis on reading and sharing the Book of Mormon. In 1988, more than 3.5 million copies were purchased, by far the most in any year to date. Perhaps more important, tens of thousands of our members are reading that book more than ever before!

### **Sow the seed of charity**

Next, we should sow within our hearts the seed of charity, the pure love of Christ. He is the perfect model of charity. His total life, particularly his atoning sacrifice, is a lesson in charity. His every act reflects absolute, unequivocal love for all mankind and for each one of us. His example teaches us that charity means subordinating personal interests willingly and gladly for the good of others. I believe our progress toward exaltation and eternal life depends upon how well we learn and live the principle of charity. Charity must become a fundamental state of mind and heart that guides us in all we do.

We urge you home teachers and visiting teachers to look after your families in a spirit of charity. Home teaching and visiting teaching are vehicles for saving souls when done the right way with the right intent.

### **Nourish the seed of harmony at home**

Next, I believe we must constantly nourish the seeds of love, harmony, and unity in our homes and families. Fathers are to preside over their families in kindness, remembering that "no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41). Husbands and wives are to love each other with a pure love that transcends selfishness. In a single-parent family, the parent presides. Parents are to nurture their children and teach them the principles of right living. Regardless of the help other individuals or institutions may give, the Lord has placed this

responsibility ultimately with parents. Children are to honor their parents (see Exodus 20:12) by obeying them, living as they are taught, and fostering peace in the home.

### **Plant the seed of the work ethic**

Parents should plant deeply the seed of the work ethic into the hearts and habits of their children. As society has shifted from an agrarian to an urban structure, the joy and necessity of diligent, hard work have been neglected. If our young people do not learn to work while in their homes, they likely will be compelled to learn later in a setting where the lesson may be painful.

The remarks of President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., given fifty-six years ago, are instructive today. He said: "It is the eternal, inescapable law that growth comes only from work and preparation, whether the growth be material, mental, or spiritual. Work has no substitute" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1933, p. 103). More recently, Elder Howard W. Hunter counseled: "The first recorded instruction given to Adam after the Fall dealt with the eternal principle of work. The Lord said: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.' (Gen. 3:19.) Our Heavenly Father loves us so completely that he has given us a commandment to work. This is one of the keys to eternal life. He knows that we will learn more, grow more, achieve more, serve more, and benefit more from a life of industry than from a life of ease" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1975, p. 122).

### **Take charge of teaching children**

Parents can plant seeds in the hearts and minds of their children only if they know where the children are and what they are doing. Parents should not leave the teaching of their children to chance. They should be in charge of their homes and families, remembering that "reproof give[s] wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15). I have heard of parents who travel extensively for pleasure, leaving their teenage children without parental protec-

tion for extended periods. Unprotected teenagers can indulge in a "little" sin without realizing the possible consequences in sorrow and disappointment.

### **Do not rationalize sin**

Too many of our young people have the idea that limited sin is not really wrong because it will be forgiven easily with no consequences. We see young people who are guilty of moral sins but are not overly concerned because they expect to repent quickly, thinking all is well. The idea that any sin is unimportant is false; it comes from the devil. "The Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance" (D&C 1:31). We should heed the counsel of Nephi when he wrote:

"Many . . . shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; . . . there is no harm in this; . . . and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God. . . ."

"... And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carelessly down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:8, 21).

We ask our young people who will be approaching marriage within a few years to think of their own unborn children. Think of what these spirits would ask you to do in your life if they could speak to you now.

### **Counsel about television**

Parents must know what their children are watching on television and must protect them from its evil influence. They should set a proper example by watching only those programs that are uplifting and worthwhile and opposing those that are corrupt and degrading. Many people decry television shows that portray sin and evil as being normal and acceptable, and even preferable to righteous living. However, viewers set the standards for television broadcasting. The networks and stations broadcast the types of programs that most of the people want to see. Mr. Frank Stanton, CBS president emeritus,

told a Brigham Young University audience that network television standards will continue to decline because they are based on society's standards. He said, "Standards come from the audience . . . ; the audience determines the programming and program content." Further, he said, "I believe there will be more infractions with respect to [immorality] and violence and it will get a lot worse before it gets better because of the changing standards of our society" (*The Daily Universe*, 2 Feb. 1989, p. 1).

What a sad commentary on our society! Again we can learn a great principle from the Book of Mormon. When King Mosiah proposed that judges should rule instead of kings, he said:

"It is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; . . .

"And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you" (Mosiah 29:26-27).

That time of iniquity came about sixty years later and at several other times. In the book of Helaman we read that "they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good" (Helaman 5:2). If television viewing choices serve as a valid measure of our society, they who choose evil surely are more numerous than they who choose good.

### Plant the seed of testimony

Finally, I suggest that we plant in our hearts the seed of testimony, a firm unwavering conviction of the truth and divinity of the gospel that we can share freely with power and persuasion. Humble, fervent testimonies borne as prompted by the Spirit can have far-reaching effects.

President Benson bore such a testimony in October 1959 when he visited the Central Baptist Church in Moscow, Russia, and was asked to speak. He described the event later as one of the most moving experiences of his life. The church was filled with about 1,500 people seeking to satisfy their spiritual hunger

and thirst even though government policy discouraged religion. He testified: "God lives, I know that He lives. He is our Father. Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the World, watches over this earth. . . . Be unafraid, keep His commandments, love one another, pray for peace and all will be well." In closing, he said: "I leave you my witness as a Church servant for many years that the truth will endure. Time is on the side of truth. God bless you and keep you all the days of your life." Those present were touched deeply. Many wept openly, including a cynical newsman and a young Russian interpreter. The congregation began singing "God Be with You Till We Meet Again." They waved their handkerchiefs in joyous gratitude and in farewell as he and those with him left the meeting. (In Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire: The Eight Years with Eisenhower* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962], pp. 485-88).

President Benson's testimony made a deep and lasting impression on a minister of that church, Father Alexander. A few years later, this minister told a Finnish member of our church, Sister Irma Airtto, that of all the notable people who visited the Baptist church and signed the guest register, Ezra Taft Benson was the greatest. President Benson was visiting Russia as a high official in the United States government, but Father Alexander recognized him as a great spiritual leader. Father Alexander told Sister Airtto, "When you meet Mr. Benson, tell him . . . that we know he is a man of God and I pray for him." Sister Airtto never expected to meet President Benson in person to convey this message. However, when he visited Finland and created the Helsinki Finland Stake in October 1977, she was able to deliver the message, strengthening her testimony that the Lord guides our affairs.

Another example of the far-reaching effects of an inspired testimony is that of the prophet Abinadi. The testimony he bore as he called an apostate king, Noah, and his priests to repentance is one of the most significant doctrinal discourses in the Book of Mormon. The king and his priests, except one, rejected Abinadi's

teachings and had him put to death. That one was Alma. Abinadi may have felt that he failed as a missionary because he had only one convert, so far as the record shows. However, that one convert, Alma, and his descendants were spiritual leaders among the Nephites and Lamanites for about three hundred years. His son Alma became the first chief judge of the Nephite people and the high priest over the Church. Alma's other descendants who became prominent religious leaders include his grandson Helaman; great-grandson Helaman; great-great-grandson Nephi; and great-great-great-grandson Nephi, who was the chief disciple of the resurrected Jesus Christ. All of this resulted from Abinadi's lone convert. (See Mosiah 18 and Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 187).

### Testimony

My brothers and sisters, I bear my testimony that we can plant in our hearts and minds the seeds I have mentioned, and others. If we will plant them and nurture them, we can be true, faithful, and

happy regardless of adversity and the buffetings of Satan.

I testify further that I know our Heavenly Father loves each of his children, that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and Redeemer, that Joseph Smith is the Prophet of the Restoration, and that President Ezra Taft Benson is the prophet today. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

---

The chorus sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer" without announcement.

---

### President Monson

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. The choir then sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation," following which Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will address us.

---

The chorus and congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

---

## Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

### The age of blaming

Brethren and sisters, we are living in a strange time. It has been called the space age or computer age. However, it seems to be the age of blaming everyone and everything for any unfavorable condition. We blame acquaintances, parents, the Church, spouses, teachers, neighbors, the area where we dwell, or even the weather for our problems.

This is wrong. It is not God's way. It is not part of his great plan. Each of us must stand before our Redeemer *alone* and account for what we have done. We must assume responsibility for our actions. Jacob wrote, "Now, my beloved brethren, . . . according to the *responsibility* which I am under to God, to

magnify mine office with soberness, [I] declare unto you the word of God" (Jacob 2:2; italics added).

Of course, heartache and pain can be spilled upon us by dishonest, manipulative, or unkind people. Accidents happen that can inflict terrible pain and sometimes lifetime disability. But to judge, blame, and not forgive always intensifies the problem. It pushes healing further into the future. It is not responsible.

### Taking responsibility for ourselves

Why should we demand or even want another to provide what we need if we can furnish it ourselves? Father Lehi taught, "Wherefore, the Lord God gave

unto man that he should act for himself" (2 Nephi 2:16).

However, too many look to the government, the Church, or some other institution to carry them. Why do we not resolve to take responsibility for our own actions and thoughts? "Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve" (Alma 30:8; see also Joshua 24:15).

It is entirely appropriate to depend upon others for some of what we need. There is no substitute for loving and supportive parents, priesthood and auxiliary leaders, skilled doctors, dedicated teachers, and expert auto mechanics. Turning to these people for help is not wrong. But what is wrong is expecting others to do what we can and should do for ourselves.

We become excited when those who have wandered return to full activity. We feel that we, perhaps, had something to do with it—and, hopefully, our love and encouragement did help. But it is the people who return who have taken responsibility for their salvation.

A missionary might say, "I brought fifteen people into the Church." No, fifteen of our brothers and sisters decided to come unto Christ and, by being baptized, assumed *responsibility* for their own spiritual progress. Our converts must be taught that fact. They will be stronger members because of it.

### People who have taken responsibility

Let me share with you some examples of taking responsibility.

Many of us have a special hero. His name is Chuck Anderson. Brother Anderson died fourteen months ago. He had an extremely rare disease, epidermalosis belosa. When he was young, whenever his skin was touched it would hemorrhage. After a time the injury would scab over. Cotton would partially protect his hands, feet, and other areas of his body, but not well enough to avoid the pain and scabbing. His skin became a form of inflexible tissue. He could not touch his scalp, so combing his hair was very difficult. He lived to be twenty-six years old, but never during those 312 months did he have a day free of pain,

scabs, and bandages, or a day that he could run and play as others.

But *he* decided to be positive and as productive as he could be. He had a wonderful sense of humor. His example of courage and of being as self-sustaining as possible blessed everyone who knew him. Of course, his wonderful parents, friends, church leaders, and teachers did all they could, but Chucky Anderson determined he would be as self-reliant as possible.

He desperately wanted to serve a mission but could not in the typical sense. So what did he do? He served a mission by helping all who knew him to know that he was a Mormon boy and loved the Lord. He made the decision to forget himself and do all he could do to be courageous and helpful and to build others.

Another example: Just last spring a group of high school students sat in a seminary class looking at their watches, hoping the class would soon end. They were not paying attention to what was going on. They were laughing and teasing and passing notes.

President Benson's face appeared on the video they should have been watching. He was talking about the Book of Mormon. The noise continued. Suddenly, a young woman stood up, stepped to the front of the class, pushed the pause button, and said in a frightened voice, "He is our prophet. He talks with Heavenly Father. He is telling us about the Book of Mormon, and we should listen."

Suddenly, every eye was focused on the front of the room as that lovely young lady turned the television set back on and quietly returned to her seat.

As I spoke with the seminary teacher a week or two later, he said, "In all the years that I have taught, I have never seen a class more reverent, more focused upon the things that matter, as the day when that young lady went to the front of the class and said, 'You listen to our prophet.' " She did it on her own. She did not wait for another.

Several months ago, after boarding an airplane scheduled to fly to Phoenix, Arizona, the passengers found themselves retained on the ground because of foggy weather. While we were waiting, the door



of the airplane opened several times and others joined us, even though it was half an hour or more after the plane should have departed.

A young teenager took the vacant seat beside me. After a short time, he looked toward me and said, "Hey, mister, are you a Mormon?"

I said "Yes" and inquired why he asked.

He reported, "I joined the Church several months ago, but I don't know whether I believe it any more."

We talked about the gospel. I bore my testimony. We discussed many things relating to the Church and to life. Meanwhile, the plane had left Salt Lake and was winging its way south.

This fine young man who wanted to have his testimony reaffirmed and strengthened was willing to do something about it. Cody and I are pen pals now. When I think of him, I recall a wonderful young man, searching for truth, needing a little reassurance, and seeking it on his own. He took responsibility.

In every ward and branch throughout the world are those who ask, "Is it true?" or inquire, "How can I change my life for the better?" We must assist, but the task is theirs alone to walk the path that will strengthen testimonies and straighten lives.

#### Four steps of taking responsibility

I would like to talk to you about how this takes place. What are the steps? What must I do to have my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ strengthened and my life modified for the better?

First, you must want to change with all your heart. You must take responsibility upon yourself to do whatever is necessary to be different.

Second, do as our prophet has directed and read the scriptures. Concentrate upon the words of the Master as reflected through the writings of Nephi, Moses, Paul, Luke, Joseph Smith, and other prophets. Often, when the days are dark and times are difficult, turning to the scriptures will provide a strength and confirmation that generally can come in no other way. To have a testimony and

personality become stronger, one must go it alone.

Third, live the commandments. We generally struggle with a weakening testimony and with a diminished knowledge of the truthfulness of Heavenly Father's plan when we do not live the way He has asked us to live. Another cannot repent for us. *This is a task we must do alone.*

Of course, everyone makes mistakes. But let me tell you about a lovely young lady who visited in my office. She was discouraged, almost depressed. She enjoyed her profession of teaching yet felt that her life was not going anywhere. To complicate the problem she was feeling, her testimony had waned, and she was lacking the spark that all who had known her acknowledged was part of her vibrant personality.

"I am going to ask you a question," I said, "but I do not want details. Are you living the commandments?"

She whispered, "No."

We talked about her going to her bishop. We also talked about testimony and about how when one lives the commandments, that individual is endowed with blessings of the Spirit that can come in no other way.

She left, seemingly as discouraged as she had entered my office. But in a while, perhaps a month later, my telephone rang. She reported that all was well.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, I went to my bishop. I am living the commandments now, and, yes, I know the gospel is true. I did it on my own," she reported.

"No one else could have done it for you," I replied.

Think of the days, weeks, even months and years wasted by people waiting for someone else to assume responsibility for their needs. It simply cannot be. God, in his heaven, will not do for us what we can and should do for ourselves.

Fourth, we all have the task to help others when they really need burdens lifted. This is the heart of Christian service. But remember, doing for others tasks they should be doing on their own leads to their detriment and atrophy.

These four steps will help us develop a oneness with the Savior. Do we fully realize that Jesus is to be the center of our lives? Only the Savior can be our Savior, and that relationship is always personal. We go to him alone. He accepts us that way only.

There is no other way.

Our Church magazines, lesson manuals, and videotapes will never supply everything that a person needs to solve a problem, prepare a lesson, or find a new direction in life. These resources will remain helpful, but all of them together will never be as complete or as powerful as the scriptures. And incidentally, let us not rely too heavily upon what others tell us the Lord is saying in the standard works. Let us find out by going directly to those sacred pages ourselves.

We love our church buildings where we worship on Sunday, play volleyball on Wednesday, and meet on other days as our assignments dictate. They are well designed and almost always beautifully maintained, but they do not substitute for our homes and never will. Even where chapels are not or cannot be found, places always will be available where good people can meet together, partake of the sacrament, and worship our Heavenly Father.

### **Personal initiative and inspiration**

Evidence shows that less is often more and often better. Homemade lesson enrichment materials, parent-and-child-designed family home evening discussions and activities, and examples that conform to the scriptures, to the words of the Brethren, and to one's unique culture are often more beneficial than materials we might purchase.

Do not outlaw common sense or forget the inspiration you can receive to

provide examples for your family worship, Gospel Doctrine lesson, or other Church assignments.

How often a child will say, "No, let me do it," when a well-meaning adult provides a little too much assistance.

Remember when you made a whistle out of a willow branch, and it sounded better than a store-bought one?

How much is lost when we limit ourselves to a rented video, a television program, or some other form of packaged entertainment. We can miss the growth and enjoyment that come from playing catch with a child, walking with a neighbor, making a simple drawing, singing with a friend, or seeking pure truth from a well-worn copy of the Book of Mormon.

What is happening to us? Why do we rely upon others for our opinions, our directions, our activities, and even our vocabulary?

It is time to say, "Whoa, stop. I want to take personal responsibility for my actions." Now is the time to stop blaming others, the government, the Church, or our circumstances for what might disturb us.

It is time to take responsibility for ourselves.

To these things I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

---

The chorus sang "Sing Praises" without announcement.

---

### **President Monson**

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us, after which the Mormon Youth Chorus favored us with "Sing Praises."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

## Elder L. Tom Perry

### Great potential for declaring the gospel

From the book of 1 Peter we receive this counsel:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

We live in the most exciting era in the history of mankind. The potential for declaring the gospel to the peoples of the world has never been greater. Throughout many lands we have established stakes of Zion. Newly constructed and well-cared-for buildings make worship service inviting to all who attend. Trained priesthood leaders are being taught how to minister to the people and build faith in the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon has been translated into many languages, making available this great doctrinal base of scripture to so many more of our Heavenly Father's children. It is opening the way for their understanding of the blessings attendant to living the Lord's law.

Technology has blessed mankind with the tools for teaching and communicating. Temples dot the maps of nations, making the saving ordinances available to millions more of our Heavenly Father's children. How exciting it is to live in this great day and be called to labor and bear testimony of the great work in which we are now engaged!

### Every member a missionary

Yet we see so much more to be done. Most of the world's population still awaits the gospel message. Blessed with a strong foundation and a world prepared as never before to receive this message, this is surely the time to heed the words of our prophet, President Benson:

"We are commanded by God to take this gospel to all the world. That is the cause that must unite us today. Only the gospel will save the world from the calamity of its own self-destruction. Only the gospel will unite men of all races and

nationalities in peace. Only the gospel will bring joy, happiness, and salvation to the human family" (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 167).

The work grows in direct proportion to the number of messengers we have proclaiming the glad tidings. Last year we had the largest number of full-time missionaries serving in many lands in the history of the Church. Last year we also had the highest yield of convert baptisms. This is gratifying, but oh, so far from our potential. Still, many of our young men, young women, and couples have not heeded the prophet's call to serve.

Even though we have heard the prophets declare for decades "Every member a missionary," we still have only a small percentage of the membership of the Church actively engaged in assisting stake and full-time missionaries in our responsibilities to declare the gospel to the world.

### Reasons for reluctance

Why have we been so reluctant to catch the spirit of this work? I believe there are two basic reasons.

*First*, we are afraid we will offend. But we have not been able to find justification for this fear. In fact, experience confirms that the member-missionary process usually enhances relationships between ourselves and our friends.

*Second*, I believe we have not prepared ourselves to be good messengers. The general membership of the Church seems to be in the same position I found myself in as a full-time missionary many years ago. At that time we were given little training to fulfill our responsibilities. As I arrived in the mission field, I was assigned a companion who was also new in the field. He was anxious to be about the work that he had been assigned and called to perform. He encouraged me almost immediately to go door-to-door tracting with him. I will never forget our first door approach. As we started toward the house, I turned to him and asked,

"What do I do?" His reply astonished me. He said, "I don't know. I have never tried this before." How different is the training of our full-time missionaries we have serving today! We need to be more on a par with them if we are to fulfill our responsibilities as member missionaries.

Experience tells us there are three messages which have the greatest appeal to those who might be interested in the gospel. Perhaps they offer us a starting point in our preparation to become better messengers.

### **Our message about the purpose of life**

The first is the purpose of life. If we were only to have life here, and if death were an end to our existence, we would have little to be concerned about. But when we study the writings of holy prophets from the beginning, we soon discover that man is a dual being, possessing a body and a spirit. The main purpose of earth life is to allow our spirits, which existed before the world was, to be united with our bodies for a time of great opportunity in mortality. The association of the two together has given us the privilege of growing, developing, and maturing as only we can with spirit and body united. With our bodies, we pass through a certain amount of trial in what is termed a probationary state of our existence. This is a time of learning and testing to prove ourselves worthy of eternal opportunities. It is all part of a divine plan our Father has for His children.

Yes, we are all anxious to know the purpose of our creation and the opportunities and limitations resulting from our mortal probation. The answers to all these questions are found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We should be prepared to declare this exciting message to those who are seeking truth.

Could I suggest that together as families you study the scriptures specifically to increase your understanding of the purpose of life? Perhaps you could check out from your ward library a video or a cassette entitled *Our Heavenly Father's Plan* and play it as part of one of your family home evenings. As family

members better comprehend where they came from, why they are here, and where they are going, they are better equipped to share this basic lesson of what life is all about with those who are earnestly seeking the answers.

### **Our message about eternal families**

The second message to those who would like to know more about the gospel is the concept of an eternal family. In the very beginning the Lord taught Adam and Eve the importance of the family. The scriptures record, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

God's plan is to unite His eternal family together through a sacred union of husband and wife which can endure beyond the grave. Responsibilities are placed upon husbands and wives to bring their children into the world and teach them who they are and what part they will have in this divine plan of our Eternal Father.

Parents have the glorious opportunity of being the most powerful influence, above and beyond any other, on the new lives that will bless their homes. Look around you, and you will soon discover that the greatest joy in this life, and the most comforting hope for the eternities to come, is found in the uniting of eternal family units. Whether we are married or single, we are a part of a family which can be eternal.

We can also observe the pain inflicted on society when proper care and training are not exerted by righteous fathers and mothers in the home.

Once again, we encourage you as families to study the scriptures dealing with the eternal nature of the family, in order that you may be living examples of what joy can be brought into this world as the result of your devotion to this eternal principle. We have another video or a cassette, entitled *Together Forever*, which you may want to play in one of your family home evenings. It should also be available to you in your meetinghouse library.

## **Our message about the Lord**

The third message is the testimony of our Lord and Savior. We declare to the world that Jesus is the Christ. We abhor the doctrine that He is a myth or a creation of conspiring men in the world. We denounce the idea that He was just a great teacher. We testify of the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, that He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world. We declare that we have an added witness of this divine truth, as contained in the Book of Mormon.

## **Translation of the Book of Mormon**

We should develop as one of our teaching skills the presentation of the truthfulness of this book as another reliable, sound witness of the mission of our Lord and Savior. We should know its history and its content. For example, let us consider the miracle of the translation of the Book of Mormon by the Prophet Joseph Smith, with Oliver Cowdery acting as his scribe.

After the 116 pages were lost when Martin Harris was allowed to take them home, the real translation began on April 7, 1829, two days after Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania, to serve as the Prophet's scribe. By May 15, five weeks later, they had reached the account of the Savior's ministry to the Nephites as contained in 3 Nephi, chapter 11.

By June 11 they had translated the last plates of Mormon, and it was on June 11 that the Prophet applied for a copyright. By June 30 the book was finished—from start to finish, no more than eighty-five days in translation time. However, with all that went on during these eighty-five days, it is apparent there were only sixty to sixty-five days in which the actual translation could have occurred.

Remember that during that time the Prophet moved from Harmony to Fayette, made several trips for supplies, received and recorded thirteen sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, received the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods, converted and baptized several people, and on and

on. They had no time to consult libraries to study the content. There was no time to revise or refine, no time to cross-reference dates or intervals and details. Instead, the text came, as Oliver recorded, day after day, uninterrupted, as the words fell from the Prophet's mouth.

This was an astonishing achievement! The text came through final copy, one time, dictated and left as it stood with only minor, stylistic editing to this day. It is no simple book dashed off from the top of a young man's head, but reflects the best of a thousand years of colonization and inspiration. Added to the rapidity with which the translation occurred is the astonishing fact that the Prophet Joseph Smith was doing it in an unknown language in which he had no training and for which there was no one to whom he could go for guidance and help.

## **Prepare to teach the Book of Mormon**

The Book of Mormon purports to be a sacred history of the inhabitants of ancient America. It teaches of a faith in Christ and strongly urges obedience to His will; it also testifies of the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, that He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Surely, we as members of the Church can prepare to be capable teachers of this second witness, the Book of Mormon, and what it gives to the world of the mission of our Lord and Savior.

## **Approach those who need the gospel**

How do we approach a friend who needs the light and life of the gospel? Be a good example! Develop a meaningful and sincere relationship of caring. Be genuinely interested in your friend's thoughts, feelings, and experiences involving our Eternal Father, the meaning of life, the reason for families, and the mission of our Savior. Have an enjoyable, edifying experience listening to your friends. Then, as President Kimball once said, "We have a double responsibility: we must testify of the things we know, feel, and have felt, and we must live so the Holy Ghost can be with us and convey our words in power to the heart of

the investigator" ("It Becometh Every Man," *Ensign*, Oct. 1977, p. 5).

The only hope I can find in this troubled world is to have the standards by which our lives are governed firmly grounded in the gospel of our Lord and Savior.

May each of us be prepared and have the courage to share this greatest of all gifts the Lord has given to His children. I testify of the truthfulness of His message in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, amen.

---

The chorus sang "Nearer, My God, to Thee" without announcement.

---

### President Monson

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

## President Howard W. Hunter

### The miracle of springtime

In our Northern Hemisphere, we are enjoying in this beautiful, bursting season of the year one of the great recurring miracles of nature—the regeneration and renewal of the earth that we call spring. There may be a few wintry days left, but the sun has begun its vernal return, the buds are appearing on the flowers and trees, and luxuriant greenery is sprouting to the surface.

How fitting that just one week ago all of Christendom celebrated on Easter Day the great restoring and renewing resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, declaring all of the joy and eternal promise that event holds for mankind. With you, I welcome this season of the year which reminds us that God is a God of miracles, that his Only Begotten Son is "the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in [him], though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

In this beautiful time of year, we remember that death has no sting and the grave has no dominion. I testify that after every winter's season there is the miracle of springtime ahead—in our personal journey through life as well as in nature. These restorations and renewals are a gift from the Lord Jesus Christ, the ultimate "man for all seasons." I wish to speak briefly of some of those divine moments

in our lives when the Savior reaches out to redeem and make whole and strengthen us.

### The God that doest wonders

The Psalmist has written:

"I cried unto God with my voice, . . . and he gave ear unto me. . . .

"And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. . . .

"Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people" (Psalm 77:1, 10, 14).

Among the signs of the true church, and included in the evidences of God's work in the world, are the manifestations of his power which we are helpless to explain or to fully understand. In the scriptures these divine acts and special blessings are variously referred to as miracles or signs or wonders or marvels.

Not surprisingly, these signs and marvels were most evident in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the very Son of God himself. But startling and wonder-filled as they were, Christ's many miracles were only reflections of those greater marvels which his Father had performed before him and continues to perform all around us. Indeed, the Savior's humble performance of such obviously divine acts may be just one very special application of the declarations he made:

"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19) and "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me" (John 8:28).

### Recognize everyday miracles

For example, the first miracle by Jesus recorded in the New Testament was the turning of water into wine at the marriage at Cana (see John 2:1-11). But poor, indeed, was the making of the wine in the pots of stone, compared with its original making in the beauty of the vine and the abundance of the swelling grapes. No one could explain the onetime miracle at the wedding feast, but then neither could they explain the everyday miracle of the splendor of the vineyard itself.

It is most remarkable to witness one who is deaf made to hear again. But surely that great blessing is no more startling than the wondrous combination of bones and skin and nerves that lets our ears receive the beautiful world of sound. Should we not stand in awe of the blessing of hearing and give glory to God for that miracle, even as we do when hearing is restored after it has been lost?

Is it not the same for the return of one's sight or the utterance of our speech, or even that greatest miracle of all — the restoration of life? The original creations of the Father constitute a truly wonder-filled world. Are not the *greatest* miracles the fact that we have life and limb and sight and speech in the first place? Yes, there will always be plenty of miracles if we have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Just one other reminder. Once we start to recognize the many miraculous and blessed manifestations of God and Christ in our lives — the everyday variety as well as restored sight to the blind and restored hearing to the deaf — we may be truly bewildered at the unexplainable principles and processes that bring about such wonders.

### Do not deny miracles

In the contemplation of miracles "we must of necessity recognize the operation

of a power transcending our present human understanding," wrote Dr. James E. Talmage, who, as both a scientist and an Apostle of the Lord, had uniquely strong qualifications for examining such phenomena (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916], p. 149). Science and the unaided human mind, he said, have not advanced far enough to analyze and explain these wonders. But, he cautioned, to deny the reality of miracles on the ground that the results and manifestations *must* be fictitious simply because we cannot comprehend the means by which they have happened is arrogant on the face of it (see p. 149). Indeed, those who have been the beneficiaries of such miracles are the most compelling witnesses of all. It is hard to argue with results.

### Jesus heals a blind man

Consider this simple but telling account from the Savior's ministry to make manifest the works of God in men's lives.

One Sabbath day Jesus anointed the eyes of a man blind from birth, and the man's eyesight was restored. It was a startling and inspiring manifestation. Unfortunately, however, some who learned of it would not rejoice that one of the local citizens had his vision returned.

"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man [meaning Jesus] is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them," the scripture tells us (John 9:16).

With such a controversy inside their ranks, this group did a very intelligent thing — they asked the opinion of the man who had been healed. "What sayest thou of him, that . . . hath opened thine eyes?" they asked, and waited for his answer (John 9:17).

As he spoke, the blind man undoubtedly looked directly into their eyes (a new and precious privilege). He said plainly, "He is a prophet" (John 9:17).

But that was an unsettling answer. After much discussion, including conversation with the man's parents, the

Pharisees agreed to acknowledge that there had indeed been a miracle and that it might have come from God, but that this man must deny any role Christ may have played in the process:

"Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man [Jesus] is a sinner" (John 9:24).

Unencumbered by theory or law, the man said, slowly enough for everyone to hear, "Whether [Jesus] be a sinner or no, I know not: [just] one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

The Pharisees, in total frustration and unable to argue with that single greatest and undeniable fact in the case, cast the man out of their presence. Then comes this sweet conclusion to a story about renewed sight and brighter light:

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

"He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

"And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

"And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him" (John 9:35-38).

Now sight had been given *twice* — once to remedy a congenital defect and once to behold the King of Kings before he would ascend to his eternal throne. Jesus had quickened both temporal and spiritual vision. He had cast his light into a dark place, and this man, like many others in that day as well as in our own, had accepted the light and had seen.

## Faith and miracles

President Spencer W. Kimball taught us with a book by the title *Faith Precedes the Miracle*. But there is, of course, an increase of faith that should follow the miracle as well. As a result of the many miracles in our lives, we should be more humble and more grateful, more kind and more believing. When we are personal witnesses to these wonders which God performs, it should increase

our respect and love for him; it should improve the way we behave. We will live better and love more if we will remember that. We are miracles in our own right, every one of us, and the resurrected Son of God is the greatest miracle of all. He is, indeed, the miracle of miracles, and every day of his life he gave evidence of it. We should try to follow after him in that example.

## Miracles have not ceased

Moroni quotes his father in the Book of Mormon:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased because Christ hath ascended into heaven? . . . Has the day of miracles ceased?" (Moroni 7:27, 35).

"I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. . . . [Nor will they], so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved" (Moroni 7:29, 36).

I testify of God's goodness and Christ's power, and of the privilege Apostles have been given. I know that Peter and John did take a lame man by the right hand and, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, command him to rise up and walk — and he did walk (see Acts 3:1-11). I testify of the restoration of the gospel in these latter days and of the priesthood powers that make possible the many modern miracles of our dispensation.

I say of our Father as the Psalmist said, "Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people" (Psalm 77:14). In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Monson

President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us. His theme was that of miracles. He spoke of the miracle of renewal, the springtime following winter, and all who have heard his voice, all who have witnessed his coming to the podium, have witnessed a miracle in our time.



We are grateful to the owners and the operators of the many television and radio stations and cable and satellite systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "Hark, All Ye Nations!" The benediction will be given by Elder

Alexander B. Morrison of the First Quorum of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

---

The chorus sang "Hark, All Ye Nations!"

Elder Alexander B. Morrison offered the benediction.

---

## FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 159th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 1, 1989, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs. Ronald Staheli and Mack Wilberg conducted, and Robert Cundick was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

### **President Gordon B. Hinckley**

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this second general session of the 159th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We commented as we looked at the building this Saturday afternoon that the Tabernacle is filled to capacity, and President Benson remarked, "These people love to come to church."

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in stake centers throughout the various parts of the world

where the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

Elders Charles Didier and John R. Lasater are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall. We are pleased to note that Elder David B. Haight is with us this afternoon. He has had a long convalescence, and it is wonderful to have him on his feet here participating with us in the conference. We welcome him with love and great appreciation.

The music for this session will be provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs, under the direction of Brothers Ronald Staheli and Mack Wilberg, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

The choir will open this session by singing "If You Could Hie to Kolob." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

---

The choir sang "If You Could Hie to Kolob."

Elder Paul H. Dunn offered the invocation.

---

## President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Redeemer of Israel." Following this, President Thomas S. Monson will present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining

vote. This will include some business of great significance and interest to all of us.

---

The choir sang "Redeemer of Israel."

---

## The Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

### President Thomas S. Monson

My brothers and sisters, as requested by President Benson, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain President Howard W. Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, kindly manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

With the continued rapid growth of the Church, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have determined that the time has come to take additional steps to provide for the expansion and regulation of the Church. We announce, therefore, the organization of the Second

Quorum of the Seventy to become effective immediately.

The initial membership of the Second Quorum of the Seventy will be those General Authorities currently serving under a five-year call. Additional brethren will be added to the Second Quorum of the Seventy from time to time and will serve as Seventies and as General Authorities also under a five-year call.

The First Quorum of the Seventy will continue much as at present, with its members called from the Second Quorum of the Seventy or from the priesthood at large.

It is proposed that we sustain as Presidents of the Seventy Elders Dean L. Larsen, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangert, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, James M. Paramore, and J. Richard Clarke. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed?

It is proposed that we sustain as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy Elders Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, F. Enzio Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goasland, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and Hans B. Ringger.

As additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, Joe J. Christensen, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, and Marlin K. Jensen.

It is proposed that we sustain the following as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, who will serve for a period of five years from the time of their initial call: Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell, George R. Hill III, John R. Lasater, Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, Robert E. Sackley, L. Lionel Kendrick, Monte J. Brough, Albert Choules, Jr., Lloyd P. George, and Gerald E. Melchin.

As additional members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, who have been called and are being presented at this

conference, Carlos H. Amado, Benjamin B. Banks, Spencer J. Condie, F. Melvin Hammond, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, and Horacio A. Tenorio. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, if any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as currently constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. We invite the newly sustained members of the Seventy to take their places on the stand.

### **President Hinckley**

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditors' report, following which Brother F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1988.

## **The Church Audit Committee Report for 1988**

### **Wilford G. Edling**

For the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of controls over receipts and expenditures of the general funds of the Church and its controlled organizations, we have reviewed the system of budgeting, accounting, and auditing, and the related financial statements of the Church for the year ended December 31, 1988, and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled.

The expenditures of general Church funds for the year were authorized by the Council on the Disposition of Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric, as prescribed by revelation from the Lord. The Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers major expenditures under the budget.

The general fund accounts of the Church are maintained by its Finance and

Records Department, which uses modern accounting technology and equipment to keep abreast of the rapidly expanding and varied activities of the Church.

The Auditing Department, which consists of a staff of certified public accountants and similarly qualified auditors, is independent of all other departments and performs financial audits, operational audits, and audits of the computer systems employed by the Church. These auditing services are performed on a continuing basis for Church departments and other Church-controlled organizations engaged in worldwide operations, including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities.

The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors. The audit procedures are established and the audit reports are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorpor-

rated businesses owned or controlled by the Church for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department are audited by the Church's internal auditors, independent professional auditing firms, or government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the system of financial controls within the Church, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records and the Auditing departments, we are of the opinion that budgeting, accounting, and auditing controls are adequate for Church needs and purposes, and that in all ma-

terial respects the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year ended December 31, 1988, have been controlled and accounted for in accordance with established Church policy and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee  
Wilford G. Edling  
David M. Kennedy  
Warren E. Pugh  
Merrill J. Bateman  
Ted E. Davis

## The Church Statistical Report for 1988

### F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1988. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1988 reports available prior to conference.)

#### Church units

Number of stakes .....	1,707
Number of districts.....	402
Number of missions.....	222
Number of wards .....	11,196
Number of branches in stakes .....	2,899
Number of branches in missions.....	2,463
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches.....	100
Number of territories, colonies, and possessions with organized wards or branches .....	25

(These statistics reflect an increase of 41 stakes and 552 wards and branches during 1988.)

#### Church membership

Total membership at the close of 1988 .....	6,720,000
--	-----------

#### Church growth during 1988

Increase in children of record.....	93,000
Children of record baptized .....	73,000
Converts baptized .....	256,515

#### Missionaries

Full-time missionaries .....	36,132
------------------------------	--------

#### Prominent member who has passed away since last April

President Marion G. Romney, former Counselor in the First Presidency and longtime member and President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

#### President Hinckley

Thank you, brethren, for those reports.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker at this session. He will be followed by Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Marvin J. Ashton

### Judging ourselves as unworthy

Over the past number of weeks I have had some conversations that have made me ponder the meaning of the word *worthy*. As I recently talked to a young twenty-year-old man, I discussed his attitude about going on a mission. He said, "I wanted to go, but I am not worthy."

"Who made that judgment?" I asked.

"I did," was his answer.

On another occasion I asked a young lady who was contemplating marriage if she was going to the temple. She said, "I would like to, but I am not worthy." In response to the same question of who determined her unworthiness, she too said, "I did."

A member mother who had known for many weeks that her daughter had planned a temple marriage was asked if she was going to attend the temple ceremony. "No. I am not worthy to get a temple recommend," she answered.

Each of these people seemed to have made his own determination about worthiness. We do not have to be hindered by self-judgment. All of us have the benefit and added wisdom of a bishop and a stake president to help us determine our worthiness and, if necessary, to assist us to begin the process of becoming worthy to accomplish whatever goal we wish to achieve. When we take it upon ourselves to pass self-judgment and simply declare, "I am not worthy," we build a barrier to progress and erect blockades that prevent our moving forward. We are not being fair when we judge ourselves. A second and third opinion will always be helpful and proper.

### Understanding what worthiness is

It occurs to me that there are probably hundreds or even thousands who do not understand what worthiness is. Worthiness is a process, and perfection is an eternal trek. We can be worthy to enjoy certain privileges without being perfect.

Perhaps it is reasonable to conclude that personal measurement or judgment

often may be severe and inaccurate. We may get bogged down as we try to understand and define *worthiness*. All of us are particularly aware of our shortcomings and weaknesses. Therefore, it is easy for us to feel that we are unworthy of blessings we desire and that we are not as worthy to hold an office or calling as someone next door.

### Overcoming feelings of inadequacy

All through life we meet some people who tell of their weaknesses with great enthusiasm and unreasonable prejudice. They may not report untruths, but they may leave out truths or they may not be fair with themselves. Misjudgments can be made. To move forward wisely and think clearly, all sides of the story must be reviewed. When we feel inadequate, capable and loving friends can help us realize our strengths and potential.

When counseling, I have always tried to get the facts. Often, people being interviewed resist sharing some of the facts because they make them uncomfortable. Worthy and lasting changes can be made only when actions are based upon the light of truth. Very often, people become comfortable in their self-declared unworthiness status.

Possibly the hardest guidelines for us to follow are those we set for ourselves. To analyze our fears, our dreams, our goals, our motives can be soul-wrenching. We need others to help us. We may find that we fear failure so much that we won't take a risk. Often our self-esteem is bruised by criticism. Many other facts about ourselves can be brought to light if we really want to know.

### Destructive misconceptions and comparisons

Perhaps we all live under some misconceptions when we look at each other on Sundays as we attend our meetings. Everyone is neatly dressed and greets each other with a smile. It is natural to assume that everyone else has his life

under control and doesn't have to deal with dark little weaknesses and imperfections.

There is a natural, probably a mortal, tendency to compare ourselves with others. Unfortunately, when we make these comparisons, we tend to compare our weakest attributes with someone else's strongest. For example, a woman who feels unschooled in the gospel may take particular note of a woman in her ward who teaches the Gospel Doctrine class and seems to have every scripture at her fingertips. Obviously these kinds of comparisons are destructive and only reinforce the fear that somehow we don't measure up and therefore we must not be as worthy as the next person.

We need to come to terms with our desire to reach perfection and with our frustration when our accomplishments or behaviors are less than perfect. I feel that one of the great myths we would do well to dispel is that we've come to earth to perfect ourselves, and nothing short of that will do. If I understand the teachings of the prophets of this dispensation correctly, we will not become perfect in this life, though we can make significant strides toward that goal.

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith offers this counsel:

"Salvation does not come all at once; we are commanded to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. It will take us ages to accomplish this end, for there will be greater progress beyond the grave, and it will be there that the faithful will overcome all things, and receive all things, even the fulness of the Father's glory.

"I believe the Lord meant just what he said: that we should be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. That will not come all at once, but line upon line, and precept upon precept, example upon example, and even then not as long as we live in this mortal life, for we will have to go even beyond the grave before we reach that perfection and shall be like God" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 2:18-19).

I am also convinced of the fact that the speed with which we head along the straight and narrow path isn't as important as the direction in which we are traveling. That direction, if it is leading toward eternal goals, is the all-important factor.

### We are of great worth to God

Another quotation, which comes from President George Q. Cannon, is very meaningful to me:

"Now, this is the truth. We humble people, we who feel ourselves sometimes so worthless, so good-for-nothing, we are not so worthless as we think. There is not one of us but what God's love has been expended upon. There is not one of us that He has not cared for and caressed. There is not one of us that He has not desired to save and that He has not devised means to save. There is not one of us that He has not given His angels charge concerning, We may be insignificant and contemptible in our own eyes and in the eyes of others, but the truth remains that we are children of God and that He has actually given His angels . . . charge concerning us, and they watch over us and have us in their keeping" (*Gospel Truths*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], 1:2).

If we are in the keeping of angels, God is certainly telling us that we are worthy to be watched over, helped, and directed by him. As we become aware of God's watch-care and as we turn to Church leaders to help us learn how to become worthy members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we learn that we can reach the status of worthiness for each goal along life's path. Yet we must strive for worthiness.

In Official Declaration — 2, accepted by the Church on September 30, 1978, we are reminded that certain privileges have worthiness as a prerequisite. In this official declaration, the word *worthy* or *worthiness* is used six times. This leaves little doubt as to the importance of being worthy if specific blessings are to be available to us.

## Interviews with priesthood leaders

As we said in the beginning, it is a wonderful strength and a needful process to be able to go to a bishop or a stake president and discuss our worthiness. During such interviews it may be determined how worthiness can be achieved if there is need for improvement.

President N. Eldon Tanner gave us some wise counsel:

"With all this evil present in the world today, it is most important that those who are responsible conduct proper interviews.

"Let us always remember that our main purpose, assignment, and responsibility is to save souls.

"It is important that those we interview realize that they are *spirit children of God* and that *we love them*, and let them know that *we love them* and are interested in their welfare and in helping them succeed in life.

"It is a great responsibility for a bishop or stake president to conduct a worthiness interview. There is equal responsibility, however, upon the member who is interviewed. Careful, searching interviews need to be conducted always individually and privately. . . .

"Let [the member] know that if there is something amiss in his life, there are ways to straighten it out. There is a great cleansing power of repentance. . . .

"You bishops and stake presidents might approach an interview for a temple recommend something like this:

"'You have come to me for a recommend to enter the temple. I have the responsibility of representing the Lord in interviewing you. At the conclusion of the interview there is provision for me to sign your recommend; but mine is not the only important signature on your recommend. Before the recommend is valid, you must sign it yourself.' . . .

"And so it is. The Lord gives the privilege to members of the Church to respond to those questions in such interviews. Then if there is something amiss, the member can get his life in order so that he may qualify for the priesthood advancement, for a mission, or for a temple recommend" (in Conference Report, Oct.

1978, pp. 59–60; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, pp. 41–42).

## The need to be chastised

As we strive for worthiness, a scripture we should not lose sight of is Doctrine and Covenants, section 136, verse 31: "He that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of [the Lord's] kingdom." Sometimes there is a great need for us to be chastised, disciplined, and corrected in a spirit of love, help, and hope. Guidance and suggestions should be offered in a loving way, but most of us tend to rebel or be dismayed when someone suggests that our conduct is less than it should be. As Benjamin Franklin once said: "Those things that hurt, instruct. It is for this reason that wise people learn not to dread but welcome problems."

## Seeking help to become worthy

In life there are requirements for almost all privileges — education demands them, business has its regulations, sports and games have their rules, the Church has certain standards, and so on. But in every case there is help to meet those requirements. It is up to us to look for that assistance so we can understand the rules and strengthen ourselves as we receive direction from the sources available. It is not wise or proper for us to judge ourselves as being unworthy and thus stop our progress.

When we dwell on our own weaknesses, it is easy to dwell on the feelings that we are unworthy. Somehow we need to bridge the gap between continually striving to improve and yet not feeling defeated when our actions aren't perfect all the time. We need to remove *unworthy* from our vocabulary and replace it with *hope* and *work*. This we can do if we turn to quieter, deeper, surer guidelines — the words of our prophets and leaders, past and present.

Abraham Lincoln wisely said, "It is difficult to make a man miserable while he feels worthy of himself and claims kindred to the great God who made him" (in *The International Thesaurus of Quotations*, comp. Rhoda Thomas Tripp

[New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970], p. 575).

### **"I Would Be Worthy"**

To reinforce the importance of the word *worthy* and of worthy processes, I would like to share part of a poem by Elder Hugh B. Brown, "I Would Be Worthy."

I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast  
called me "son,"  
And fired my soul with the  
astounding thought  
That there is something of thee  
in me.

May the prophecy of this  
relationship—  
Impel me to be worthy.

I am grateful for a covenant birth;  
For noble parents and an ancestry  
who beckon me  
To heights beyond my grasp, but still  
attainable  
If with stamina and effort I cultivate  
their seed—  
And prove that I am worthy.

I am grateful for a companion on this  
Eternal Quest,  
Whose roots and birth and vision  
match my own;  
Whose never-failing faith and loyalty  
have furnished light in darkness,  
And re-steered fortitude. May her  
faith in me  
Inspire me to be worthy.

I am grateful for the cleansing power  
of parenthood,  
With its self-denial and sacrifice—  
prerequisites to filial and parent  
love;  
For each child entrusted to our care,  
I humbly thank thee;

If I would associate with them  
eternally,  
I know I must be worthy. . . .

I am grateful for the lifting power of  
the gospel of thy Son;  
For the knowledge thou hast given  
me of its beauty, truth and worth.  
To attain its promised glory, may I  
to the end endure,  
And then, forgiven, let charity tip the  
scales and allow me  
To be considered worthy.

(*Eternal Quest*, sel. Charles Manley  
Brown [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft,  
1956], p. 13)

It is my hope and prayer that we will learn individually and collectively the importance of the process of becoming worthy. We are entitled to the help of others not only in assessing our worthiness but also in making the classification of "worthy" available to each of us. As we measure our worthiness, let us no longer put limitations upon ourselves. Rather, let us use those strengths and powers that are available to make us worthy to gain great heights in personal development. Thus we will reap the joy that comes to those who desire to improve and move forward with determination and effectiveness as they practice self-discipline and refuse to judge themselves as unworthy.

I leave my love, blessings, and testimony of these truths in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy will now address us.

## **Elder Ronald E. Poelman**

### **Adversity in the lives of the obedient**

"Happiness," in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "is the object and

design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (*History of the Church*, 5:134). Often that path includes afflic-



tion, trials, and suffering—physically, mentally, and even spiritually.

Adversity, or what we perceive to be adversity, enters into the life of every individual at various times and in various forms. Adversity may be the consequence of willful disobedience to the laws of God. However, my remarks are directed to those who with righteous desire seek earnestly to learn and strive diligently to do God's will, yet nevertheless experience adversity. Much about this subject we do not understand, but let us consider some of what the Lord has revealed.

Adversity in the lives of the obedient and faithful may be the consequence of disease, accidental injury, ignorance, or the influence of the adversary. To preserve free agency, the Lord also at times permits the righteous to suffer the consequences of evil acts by others (see 1 Nephi 18:16).

Some may respond to such innocent suffering with resentment, anger, bitterness, doubt, or fear (see 1 Nephi 17:20). Others, with a knowledge and testimony of the divine plan of salvation, often respond with faith, patience, and hope born of that "peace . . . which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:6-7).

### Values of adversity

The plan of salvation presented to and accepted by us in our premortal state includes a probationary period on earth, during which we experience opposites, make choices, learn the consequences thereof, and prepare to return to the presence of God. Experiencing adversity is an essential part of the process. Knowing this, we elected to come into mortality. (See 2 Nephi 2:11-16.)

The Savior himself "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Prophets and Apostles, ancient and modern, have struggled with adversity in their own lives, as well as with trials associated with their divine callings. No one is exempt.

However, Paul teaches "that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Similarly, the

prophet Lehi assured his son Jacob with these words:

"Jacob, . . . in thy childhood thou hast suffered afflictions and much sorrow because of [others].

"Nevertheless, . . . thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain" (2 Nephi 2:1-2).

### Responding positively to adversity

How, then, shall we respond to undeserved adversity in our own lives? How may our responses to affliction and suffering draw us closer to the Savior, to our Heavenly Father, and to the realization of our own celestial potential? May I suggest some examples and role models found in the scriptures.

The sons of Mosiah, in the course of their missionary labors, "had many afflictions . . . both in body and in mind . . . and also much labor in the spirit" (Alma 17:5). Partly because of such experiences, they became "strong in the knowledge of the truth; . . . men of a sound understanding . . . [who] searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. . . .

"They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation" (Alma 17:2-3). Through their positive response to adversity, they grew spiritually.

In the time of Nephi, son of Helaman, "the more humble part of the people . . . [suffered] much affliction"; but they fasted and prayed frequently and became "stronger in their humility, and . . . firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation" (Helaman 3:34, 35).

From their example, we learn some positive responses to our own undeserved adversity.

### Look to the Savior

As they did, we should look to the Savior for divine assistance. Paul reminds us that "we have a great high priest, . . .

Jesus the Son of God, . . . [who is] touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:14–15). We are invited to seek his "help in time of need" (4:16).

Because the Savior suffered "pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind . . . [taking] upon him the pains and the sickness of his people . . . [and taking] upon him their infirmities, . . . [he knows] according to the flesh how to [help] his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11–12). Therefore, we should follow the counsel of Amulek: "Let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you" (Alma 34:27).

### **Study the scriptures daily**

Next, our prayers should be accompanied with daily scripture study. The eternal perspective attained thereby reminds us of who we are, what the true purpose of this mortal experience is, and who placed us here. The availability of divine help is repeatedly reconfirmed. Daily scripture study also makes us continuously conscious of covenants we have made with the Lord and of his promised blessings.

### **Fulfill the baptismal covenant**

As we fulfill our baptismal covenant, we "bear one another's burdens, that they may be light" (Mosiah 18:8), and our own burdens are lightened. We "comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (18:9), and we receive comfort. When we "stand as witnesses of God . . . in all things" (18:9), we feel his redeeming love and see our present circumstances more clearly in the perspective of eternal life. In a sense, we are thereby accepting the Savior's invitation:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30). Is it not probable that bearing his yoke and his burden includes forgetting self in service to others?

### **Bear afflictions patiently**

Patience must also be part of our response to adversity. Ammon, son of Mosiah, recalling personal challenges, acknowledged, "Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back [or, in other words, give up], . . . the Lord comforted us, and said: . . . bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success" (Alma 26:27).

In our day, the Lord has counseled: "Fear not, let your hearts be comforted; . . . rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks; waiting patiently on the Lord. . . . And all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good" (D&C 98:1–3).

### **Blessings of positive responses to adversity**

Repeated assurances have been given regarding the benefits and blessings of positive responses to adversity, however undeserved. The witness of the Spirit and the manifestation of greater things often follow the trial of one's faith (see Ether 12:6; 3 Nephi 26:7–9). Spiritual refinement may be realized in the "furnace of affliction" (1 Nephi 20:10). Thereby we may be prepared to experience personal and direct contact with God.

In modern revelation we are instructed, "Sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:68). Ancient prophets teach us that "when he shall appear . . . we shall see him as he is . . . [and] be purified even as he is pure" (Moroni 7:48; see also 1 John 3:2).

The Lord's own way of preparing us to see him as he is may well include the refining furnace of affliction, that we may

"offer a sacrifice [to him] . . . of a broken heart and a contrite spirit," the promised reward being "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:8, 23).

Each of us is the spiritual offspring of God. We came to this earth to prepare to return to his presence, there to share a fulness—that is, eternal life. Without adversity, we may tend to forget the divine purpose of mortality and live our lives focused on the transitory things of the world.

Should we therefore desire or seek to experience adversity and suffering? No! May we appropriately try to avoid it? Yes! Is it proper to ask for relief? Yes, always adding, in accordance with the Savior's example, "nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

### **The trials of Alma and his people**

There is encouragement and comfort in knowing that we will not be tested beyond our capacity to endure, that we will benefit from our adversities, and that the resources and circumstances necessary for us to do so will be provided (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). From the Book of Mormon comes another illustration:

Those with whom Alma shared the inspired teachings of Abinadi entered into the baptismal covenant and began to live the gospel fully. There was no contention among them; they were knit together in unity and in love one toward another, caring for the poor and needy and for one another temporally and spiritually. Because of their industry and the harmony among them, they prospered. (See Mosiah 23:15–20). Certainly they did not deserve adversity. However, they were provided with the opportunity for further spiritual growth.

The scriptural account continues with these words: "Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith" (Mosiah 23:21). Notwithstanding their righteousness, these faithful people suffered much affliction. Understandably, they pleaded with the Lord for relief, per-

haps hoping that the burdens would be removed. In response to their pleadings, the Lord comforted them and assured them of his help. (See Mosiah 24:8–14). Then he strengthened them "that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord" (Mosiah 24:15). Eventually, because of their faith and patience, they were delivered from their afflictions. Having been further refined spiritually, and with increased faith, "they gave thanks to God" (Mosiah 24:22; see also 24:16–21).

### **"May Christ lift thee up"**

In the final days of the Nephite civilization, the prophet Mormon wrote a letter to his son, Moroni, describing the wickedness, cruelty, and depravity which caused innocent people to suffer. Then he added these words of admonition and comfort:

"My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down . . . ; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, . . . his mercy . . . and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever.

"And may the grace of God the Father . . . and our Lord Jesus Christ . . . be, and abide with you forever" (Moroni 9:25–26), which is also my prayer for each of us, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Hope of Israel." Following this, we shall be pleased to hear remarks from Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

---

The choir and congregation sang "Hope of Israel."

---

## Bishop Glenn L. Pace

One day as one of my sons bade me farewell prior to his leaving for high school, I noticed he had forgotten to tie his shoelaces. For a fleeting second, I was tempted to turn the moment into the major crisis of the week, but, thankfully, I let it pass. A few days later we went to a school function where, to my amazement, I observed the shoelaces of all of the young men were untied. I then realized my son had fallen victim to another fad. I think it was in this same year that I found out it was no longer socially acceptable to go to school with boots, gloves, or earmuffs.

Sometimes we appear to be enslaved by fads and trends in society. Some are good. Some are silly but harmless. Others can be detrimental to our physical or spiritual health.

Knowing the shortest distance from the world to the celestial kingdom is a straight line, the Lord has restored his gospel, which contains the truth and guidance we need to make the journey as smooth as possible. We can avoid unnecessary detours by reading the scriptures and listening to the Lord's current prophets. As the Church holds firm to the traditional values taught by prophets of previous dispensations and reaffirmed by our modern-day prophets, the pointing finger of a failing society seems to be regularly aimed at us. One can hardly get through a day without hearing some form of criticism about the Church.

I will discuss three groups of critics. In order of ascending concern they are (1) nonmembers, (2) former members, and (3) current members.

### Criticism from nonmembers

Responsible nonmember teasing and criticism is harmless. In fact, it helps keep us on our toes. Occasionally, we need to step back and look at ourselves from a nonmember's perspective. Really now, *to them*, aren't we just a little bit strange? Imagine yourself coming into a Mormon community for the first time and hearing talk about gold plates, an angel

named Moroni, and baptisms for the dead. Imagine seeing, for the first time, nine children and two beleaguered parents in a beat-up station wagon with a bumper sticker reading, "Families are Forever." The puzzled nonmember doesn't know if this is a boast or a complaint. And where do these families go to church? At a stake house. We are strange to nonmembers—until they get to know us.

In this regard, my counsel to members would be to relax, lighten up, mellow out, and not get so huffy. While the gospel is sacred and serious, sometimes we take ourselves a little too seriously. A sense of humor, especially about ourselves, is an attribute worthy of development.

Other criticisms we receive from nonmembers are a little more painful. Criticism always hurts most when we deserve it. There are a few active members who don't live up to what they have been taught. They can be condescending, intolerant, or clannish. Such characteristics strike at the very heart of the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). One can be a friend to all without participating in all of their activities. How shortsighted one is to place church denominational limits on his friendships. How one robs himself when his friendship is contingent upon another's willingness to listen to the first discussion.

We would eliminate the most painful criticism from responsible nonmembers by simply internalizing and living what the Church teaches.

### Criticism from former members

The second category of critics is former members who have become disenchanted with the Church but who are obsessed with making vicious and vile attacks upon it. Most members and nonmembers alike see these attacks for what they really are. What credibility can possibly be given to a person who mocks beliefs held sacred by another? Anyone who would resort to these attacks unwit-

tingly discloses his or her true character—or lack of the same. As members of the Church, we are appalled by such attacks. Hopefully, however, they make us more sensitive and extra careful not to make light of the sacred beliefs of other denominations.

In addition to attacking our sacred beliefs, some former members speak evil of the Brethren. Joseph Smith received his share of this criticism from the dissidents of his day. The Lord's revelation to him is applicable to us today:

"Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them.

"But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves" (D&C 121:16–17).

It seems that history continues to teach us, You can leave the Church, but you can't leave it alone. The basic reason for this is simple. Once someone has received a witness of the Spirit and accepted it, he leaves neutral ground. One loses his testimony only by listening to the promptings of the evil one, and Satan's goal is not complete when a person leaves the Church, but when he comes out in open rebellion against it.

### Criticism from within the Church

The last category of criticism I will address comes from within the Church itself. This criticism is more lethal than that coming from nonmembers and former members. The danger lies not in what may come from a member critic, but in the chance that we might become one.

One activity which often leads a member to be critical is engaging in inappropriate intellectualism. While it would seem the search for and discovery of truth should be the goal of all Latter-day Saints, it appears some get more satisfaction from trying to discover new uncertainties. I have friends who have literally spent their lives, thus far, trying to

nail down every single intellectual loose end rather than accepting the witness of the Spirit and getting on with it. In so doing, they are depriving themselves of a gold mine of beautiful truths which cannot be tapped by the mind alone.

Elder Faust describes this type of intellectual as "a person who continues to chase after a bus even after he has caught it." We invite everyone to get on the bus before it's out of sight and you are left forever trying to figure out the infinite with a finite mind. In the words of Elijah, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

Inappropriate intellectualism sometimes leads one to testify that he knows the *gospel* is true but believes the *Brethren* are just a little out of touch. Out of touch with what? Don't confuse a decision to abstain from participating in a trend with a lack of awareness about its existence. These Brethren "prove all things" and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). To accomplish this, they are in constant touch with Him who created this earth and knows the world from beginning to end.

There are some of our members who practice selective obedience. A prophet is not one who displays a smorgasbord of truth from which we are free to pick and choose. However, some members become critical and suggest the prophet should change the menu. A prophet doesn't take a poll to see which way the wind of public opinion is blowing. He reveals the will of the Lord to us. The world is full of deteriorating churches that have succumbed to public opinion and have become more dedicated to tickling the ears of their members than obeying the laws of God.

In 1831 some converts wanted to bring a few of their previous beliefs into the Church with them. Our problem today is with members who seem very vulnerable to the trends in society (and the pointing fingers which attend them) and want the Church to change its position to accommodate them. The doctrinal grass on the other side of the fence looks very green to them.

The Lord's counsel in 1831 is relevant today: "Behold, I say unto you, that they desire to know the truth in part, but not all, for they are not right before me and must needs repent" (D&C 49:2).

We need to accept the full truth—even all of it—"put on the whole armour of God" (Ephesians 6:11), and get to work building up the kingdom. Each of us might ask ourselves, Am I a positive contributor to building up the kingdom in our day of this dispensation of the fulness of times?

There was a time in my life when I fantasized about how valiant I would have been had I been born at another time. If I had been born of Adam, I would have saved Cain. If I had been born of Noah, the ark would have been larger in order to carry all of my converts. If I had been with Moses, we could have cut the forty years in the wilderness down to twenty. If I had been with Joseph Smith, we would still be in Jackson County living the united order. I had some wonderful fantasies. One time, as I was winning another imaginary battle, a question was placed in my mind. "You say you would have died for the Prophet Joseph Smith. What are you doing for President Spencer W. Kimball?" I was crushed by the answer to that question and made up my mind things were going to be different.

Why do we sometimes find it easier to accept and follow past prophets? It is partly because history has proven their counsel to be sound. Future generations will find the same to be true of the prophets of our day. Each of us might ask

ourselves, What am I doing for President Ezra Taft Benson?

### **Testimony of today's prophets**

As a Presiding Bishopric, we work closely with our current prophets, seers, and revelators. Based on that physical observation as well as a spiritual confirmation, I testify that these men have no desire or goal other than to assist the Lord in his purpose "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). I can also tell you firsthand they are highly intelligent individuals. They understand the current problems facing members of the Church throughout the world and are not naive to the major issues and trends of society. I testify to you that Ezra Taft Benson is a prophet of God and is surrounded by other special witnesses of the Savior. Jesus the Christ stands at the head of this church, and he has personally called these servants who preside over us.

In the Lord's wisdom, he has not left any of us dependent on another's testimony. May the Lord bless each of us to obtain and retain our personal witness and then follow the Brethren. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## **Elder Dallin H. Oaks**

### **The voice of the Good Shepherd**

Last summer, at a Pioneer parade in Wyoming, I saw a young colt separated from its mother. The lost youngster whinnied and trotted about, listening to a chorus of voices as it sought the voice that would guide it back to the side of the one it loved.

At other times I have seen lambs lost in a moving herd of sheep. A great chorus of voices rises from the herd, but each lamb listens for the one voice that can guide it. The Savior used this ageless example in the allegory of the Good Shepherd. "The sheep hear his voice: . . . and

the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, . . . for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:3-5).

From among the chorus of voices we hear in mortality, we must recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd, who calls us to follow him toward our heavenly home.

### Many alternate voices

As Paul said to the Corinthians, "There are . . . so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification" (1 Corinthians 14:10).

Some voices speak of the things of the world, providing the useful information we need to make our way in mortality. I will make no further reference to these voices. My remarks will refer to those voices that speak of God, of his commandments, and of the doctrines, ordinances, and practices of his church. Some of those who speak on these subjects have been called and given divine authority to do so. Others, whom I choose to call alternate voices, speak on these subjects without calling or authority.

In the five years since I was called as a General Authority, I have seen many instances where Church leaders and members have been troubled by things said by these alternate voices. I am convinced that some members are confused about the Church's relationship to the alternate voices. As a result, members can be misled in their personal choices, and the work of the Lord can suffer.

Some alternate voices are those of well-motivated men and women who are merely trying to serve their brothers and sisters and further the cause of Zion. Their efforts fit within the Lord's teaching that his servants should not have to be commanded in all things, but "should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27).

Other alternate voices are pursuing selfish personal interests, such as property, pride, prominence, or power. Other voices are the bleatings of lost souls who cannot hear the voice of the Shepherd and

trot about trying to find their way without his guidance. Some of these voices call out guidance for others — the lost leading the lost.

Some alternate voices are of those whose avowed or secret object is to deceive and devour the flock. The Good Shepherd warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15; see also 3 Nephi 14:15). In both the Bible and the Book of Mormon the Savior charged his shepherds to watch over and protect the flock from such wolves (see Acts 20:28-29; Alma 5:59).

There have always been alternate voices whose purpose or effect is to deceive. Their existence is part of the Plan. The prophet Lehi taught that there "must needs be . . . an opposition in *all* things" (2 Nephi 2:11; italics added). And there have always been other alternate voices whose purpose or effect is unselfish and wholesome.

In most instances, alternate voices are heard in the same kinds of communications the Church uses to perform its mission. The Church has magazines and other official publications, a newspaper supplement, letters from Church leaders, general conferences, and regular meetings and conferences in local units. Similarly, alternate voices are heard in magazines, journals, and newspapers and at lectures, symposia, and conferences.

### The Church's position

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not attempt to isolate its members from alternate voices. Its approach, as counseled by the Prophet Joseph Smith, is to teach correct principles and then leave its members to govern themselves by personal choices.

Of course, the Church does have a responsibility to point out what is the voice of the Church and what is not. This is especially necessary when some alternate voice, deliberately or inadvertently, communicates a message in a way that implies Church sponsorship or acquiescence.

For the same reason, the Church does approve or disapprove those publications that are to be published or used in the official activities of the Church, general or local. For example, we have procedures to ensure approved content for materials published in the name of the Church or used for instruction in its classes. These procedures can be somewhat slow and cumbersome, but they have an important benefit. They provide a spiritual quality control that allows members to rely on the truth of what is said. Members who listen to the voice of the Church need not be on guard against being misled. They have no such assurance for what they hear from alternate voices.

Local Church leaders also have a responsibility to review the content of what is taught in classes or presented in worship services, as well as the spiritual qualifications of those they use as teachers or speakers. Leaders must do all they can to avoid expressed or implied Church endorsement for teachings that are not orthodox or for teachers who will use their Church position or prominence to promote something other than gospel truth.

Church leaders are sometimes invited to state the Church's position at a debate or symposium about some doctrine, ordinance, or practice of the Church. This kind of presentation gives an audience the benefit of whatever illumination results from the adversarial clash of opposing viewpoints. Representatives of a business organization, a political party, or a social action group might welcome such an invitation. But the Church is directed to avoid disputation and contention. Moreover, if a representative of the Church participated in such an event, this could have the unwanted effect of encouraging Church members to look to the sponsors of alternate voices to bring them information on the positions of the Church.

Members of the Church are free to participate or to listen to any alternate voices they choose, but Church leaders should avoid official involvement, directly or indirectly.

There are disadvantages to official nonparticipation in events where Church doctrines, ordinances, or practices are

discussed. In some instances, the overall presentation will be decidedly inaccurate or unfair because the position of the Church and the knowledge of its leaders are not presented. In other instances, a volunteer will step forward to present what he or she considers to be the Church's position. Sometimes these volunteers are well-informed and capable, and they contribute to a balanced presentation. Sometimes they are not, and their contribution makes matters worse. When attacked by error, truth is better served by silence than by a bad argument.

In any case, volunteers do not speak for the Church. As long as Church leaders feel they should not participate in an event where the Church or its doctrines are discussed, the overall presentation will be incomplete and unbalanced. In such circumstances, no one should think that the Church's silence constitutes an admission of facts asserted in that setting.

### **Church members' relationship to alternate voices**

Individual members of the Church may also confront difficult questions when they are invited to participate. The question is more complicated when the invitation does not relate to a publication or a lecture on a single subject, but to a group of articles, a series of publications, or a conference or symposium with a large number of subjects. One article or one issue of a publication or one session of a conference may be edifying and uplifting, something a faithful Latter-day Saint would wish to support or enjoy. But another article or another session may be destructive, something a faithful Latter-day Saint would not wish to support or promote.

Some of life's most complicated decisions involve mixtures of good and evil. To what extent can one seek the benefit of something good one desires when this can only be done by simultaneously promoting something bad one opposes? That is a personal decision, but it needs to be made with a sophisticated view of the entire circumstance and with a prayer for heavenly guidance.



There are surely limits at which every faithful Latter-day Saint would draw the line. For example, in my view a person who has made covenants in the holy temple would not make his or her influence available to support or promote a source that publishes or discusses the temple ceremonies, even if other parts of the publication or program are unobjectionable. I would not want my support or my name used to further a public discussion of things I have covenanted to hold sacred.

### Ways to acquire sacred knowledge

As Latter-day Saints consider their personal relationship to various alternate voices, they will be helped by considering the ways we acquire knowledge, especially knowledge of sacred things.

In modern revelation the Lord has told us to "seek learning . . . by study and also by faith" (D&C 109:7).

We seek learning by studying the accumulated wisdom of various disciplines and by using the powers of reasoning placed in us by our Creator.

We should also seek learning by faith in God, the giver of revelation. I believe that many of the great discoveries and achievements in science and the arts have resulted from a God-given revelation. Seekers who have paid the price in perspiration have been magnified by inspiration.

The acquisition of knowledge by revelation is an extra bonus to seekers in the sciences and the arts, but it is the fundamental method for those who seek to know God and the doctrines of his gospel. In this area of knowledge, scholarship and reason are insufficient.

A seeker of truth about God must rely on revelation. I believe this is what the Book of Mormon prophet meant when he said, "To be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:29). It is surely what the Savior taught when he said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

The way to revelation is righteousness. Marveling at the Master's teachings, his enemies asked:

"How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:15-17).

The Book of Mormon teaches that those who diligently seek shall have "the mysteries of God . . . unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 10:19; see also 1 Corinthians 2:4-16; Alma 18:35; D&C 121:26). The prophet Jacob declared the impossibility of uninspired man's understanding God: "No man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God" (Jacob 4:8).

The Lord's prescribed methods of acquiring sacred knowledge are very different from the methods used by those who acquire learning exclusively by study. For example, a frequent technique of scholarship is debate or adversarial discussion, a method with which I have had considerable personal experience. But the Lord has instructed us in ancient and modern scriptures that we should not contend over the points of his doctrine (see 3 Nephi 11:28-30; D&C 10:63). Those who teach the gospel are instructed not to preach with "wrath" or "strife" (D&C 60:14; see also 2 Timothy 2:23-25), but in "mildness and in meekness" (D&C 38:41), "reviling not against revilers" (D&C 19:30). Similarly, techniques devised for adversary debate or to search out differences and work out compromises are not effective in acquiring gospel knowledge. Gospel truths and testimony are received from the Holy Ghost through reverent personal study and quiet contemplation.

### How to learn by faith

In the scriptures, the Lord has specified how we learn by faith. We must be humble, cultivate faith, repent of our

sins, serve our fellowmen, and keep the commandments of God (see Ether 12:27; D&C 1:28; 12:8; 50:28; 63:23; 136:32–33). As the Book of Mormon says, “Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God” (Alma 26:22).

I have seen some persons attempt to understand or undertake to criticize the gospel or the Church by the method of reason alone, unaccompanied by the use or recognition of revelation. When reason is adopted as the only—or even the principal—method of judging the gospel, the outcome is predetermined. One cannot find God or understand his doctrines and ordinances by closing the door on the means He has prescribed for receiving the truths of his gospel. That is why gospel truths have been corrupted and gospel ordinances have been lost when left to the interpretation and sponsorship of scholars who lack the authority and reject the revelations of God.

That is what the Savior told his professional critics, as recorded in the eleventh chapter of Luke. He was confronted by a group who had hypocritically built monuments to the prophets their predecessors had murdered, while personally rejecting the living prophets God was sending them (see Luke 11:47–49). In what I understand to be a condemnation of their rejection of revelation, the Savior pronounced woe upon these worldly professionals: “For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered” (Luke 11:52).

The early leaders of the restored church had to learn that same truth. In several revelations the Lord rebuked Joseph Smith, David Whitmer, and others for not having their minds on the things of God, for yielding to “the persuasions of men” (D&C 3:6; 5:21), and for being “persuaded by those whom I have not commanded” (D&C 30:2).

The correct relationship between study and faith in the receipt of sacred knowledge is illustrated in Oliver Cowdery’s attempt to translate ancient records. He failed because he “took no

thought,” but only asked God (D&C 9:7). The Lord told him he should have “stud[ie]d it out in [his] mind” and then asked if it was right (9:8). Only then would the Lord reveal whether the translation was correct or not. And only on receiving that revelation could the text be written, because “you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me” (9:9). In the acquisition of sacred knowledge, scholarship and reason are not alternatives to revelation. They are a means to an end, and the end is revelation from God.

God has promised that if we ask him, we will “receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that [we may] know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (D&C 42:61).

### Seek sacred knowledge

In our day we are experiencing an explosion of knowledge about the world and its people. But the people of the world are not experiencing a comparable expansion of knowledge about God and his plan for his children. On that subject, what the world needs is not more scholarship and technology but more righteousness and revelation.

I long for the day prophesied by Isaiah when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:9; 2 Nephi 21:9). In an inspired utterance, the Prophet Joseph Smith described the Lord’s “pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints” (D&C 121:33). This will not happen for those whose “hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men” (121:35). Those who fail to learn and use “principles of righteousness” (121:36) will be left to themselves to kick against those in authority, “to persecute the saints, and to fight against God” (121:38). In contrast, the Lord makes this great promise to the faithful:

“The doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow into thee forever and ever" (D&C 121:45-46).

I testify of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

## Elder James E. Faust

I rejoice in the historic action taken at this session of conference, and with all my heart I welcome the new Seventies into the brotherhood of the General Authorities.

As President Hunter noted this morning, it is spring in the Northern Hemisphere. All nature is stirring. The grass is growing. The leaves are budding. The fruit trees are straining to blossom. Lambs are being born. Flowers are coming forth. We have celebrated the Easter season, and we have joined all Christendom to rejoice in the resurrection of the Savior from the tomb of death.

### The Comforter

It was a profoundly moving event those centuries ago when the Savior led his beloved disciples into the favored Garden of Gethsemane for the last time. Jesus was mindful of the great ordeal ahead of him. He agonized, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch" (Mark 14:34). He was ready for the unspeakable agony. Said he, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38).

The eleven Apostles no doubt sensed — but could not understand — that some portentous event would happen. Jesus had spoken of leaving them. They knew that the Master whom they loved and depended upon was going somewhere, but where, they did not know. They had heard him say, "I will not leave you comfortless. . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the

Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:18, 26).

It is of this Comforter that I wish to speak today. I do so because I am persuaded that there is a greater need for divine oversight in our lives today than ever before. I wish to testify that, by the power and gift of the Holy Ghost, we can know what to do and what not to do to bring happiness and peace to our lives.

### The Spirit of God

Elder LeGrand Richards stated, "It must . . . be understood that the Holy Ghost is the medium through whom God and his Son, Jesus Christ, communicate with men [and women] upon the earth" (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 119). All men are enlightened by the Spirit of God, or Light of Christ — sometimes called conscience. Job stated, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). This is the Spirit of God emanating from Deity. This power of God is the means by which, as President Joseph F. Smith stated, "every man is enlightened, the wicked as well as the good, the intelligent and the ignorant, the high and the low, each in accordance with his capacity to receive the light" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 62; see also D&C 88:3-13).

## The gift of the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost, however, in distinction from the Spirit of God, does not come to all men and women. The ministrations of the Holy Ghost are, however, limited without receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "there is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 199). Many outside the Church have received revelation from the Holy Ghost, convincing them of the truth of the gospel. Cornelius, as well as many in attendance on the day of Pentecost, received the Holy Ghost before baptism (see Acts 2:1-12; 10:30-44). It is through this power that seekers after truth acquire a testimony of the Book of Mormon and the principles of the gospel.

The gift of the Holy Ghost comes after one repents and becomes worthy. It is received after baptism by the laying on of hands by those who have the authority. On the day of Pentecost, Peter instructed those who had previously been touched spiritually by the Holy Ghost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Those possessing the gift of the Holy Ghost can come to a greater light and testimony. The Holy Ghost bears witness of the truth and impresses upon the soul the reality of God the Father and the son Jesus Christ so deeply that no earthly power or authority can separate him from that knowledge (see 2 Nephi 31:18).

## A sure compass

The Book of Mormon, the Bible, and other scriptures, along with the guidance of modern prophets, provide true standards of conduct. In addition, the gift of the Holy Ghost is available as a sure guide, as the voice of conscience, and as a moral compass. This guiding compass is personal to each of us. It is unerring. It is unfailing. However, we must listen

to it in order to steer clear of the shoals which will cause our lives to sink into unhappiness and self-doubt.

We need a sure compass because many of the standards, values, vows, and obligations which have helped us preserve our spirituality, our honor, our integrity, our worth, and our decency have little by little been assaulted and discarded. I speak, among other values, of the standards of chastity, parental respect, fidelity in marriage, and obedience to God's laws—such as Sabbath observance—which have been weakened, if not destroyed. Society has been misled.

## Evil is often accepted gradually

Thomas R. Rowan, commenting on the lowering of television standards, said: "Author and commentator Malcolm Muggeridge once told a story about some frogs who were killed without resistance by being boiled alive in the cauldron of water. Why didn't they resist? Because when they were put in the cauldron, the water was tepid. Then the temperature was raised ever so slightly, and the water was warm, then a tiny bit warmer, then a bit warmer still, and on and on and on. The change was so gradual, almost imperceptible, that the frogs accommodated themselves to their new environment—until it was too late. The point that Mr. Muggeridge was making was not about frogs but about us and how we tend to accept evil as long as it is not a shock that is thrust on us abruptly. We are inclined to accept something morally wrong if it is only a shade more wrong than something we are already accepting" (*National Press Club Forum*).

This gradual process was foretold by ancient prophets. Nephi tells us that the hearts of the children of men would be stirred up "to anger against that which is good. And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:20-21).

I have always been fascinated that people are led carefully down to hell.

Alexander Pope expressed a similar thought concerning the acceptance of evil:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien  
As to be hated needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her  
face,  
We first endure, then pity,  
then embrace.  
(*Essay on Man*, epistle 2, lines  
217-20)

### The Holy Ghost can strengthen us

The gift of the Holy Ghost will prompt us to resist temptation by reminding us of the gospel law in the very moment of temptation. Said B. H. Roberts, "By having the Holy Spirit as one's prompter in the moments of temptation, . . . this law of the Gospel . . . may be complied with" (*The Gospel: An Exposition of Its First Principles and Man's Relationship to Deity*, 10th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965], pp. 191-92).

I wish to alert young people to this special, transcendent gift of the Holy Ghost, which is available to all. This Comforter is a personage of spirit and a member of the Godhead. The Doctrine and Covenants explains why the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us" (D&C 130:22).

The gift of the Holy Ghost entitles a person who is desirous and worthy to enjoy "the power and light of truth of the Holy Ghost" (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 61).

The comforting Spirit of the Holy Ghost can abide with us twenty-four hours a day: when we work, when we play, when we rest. Its strengthening influence can be with us year in and year out. That sustaining influence can be with

us in joy and sorrow, when we rejoice as well as when we grieve.

### The Comforter brings peace

I believe the Spirit of the Holy Ghost is the greatest guarantor of inward peace in our unstable world. It can be more mind-expanding and can make us have a better sense of well-being than any chemical or other earthly substance. It will calm nerves; it will breathe peace to our souls. This Comforter can be with us as we seek to improve. It can function as a source of revelation to warn us of impending danger and also help keep us from making mistakes. It can enhance our natural senses so that we can see more clearly, hear more keenly, and remember what we should remember. It is a way of maximizing our happiness.

The Spirit—the Holy Ghost—will help us work out our insecurities. For instance, it can help us learn to forgive. There comes a time when people must move on, seeking greater things rather than being consumed by the memory of some hurt or injustice. Dwelling constantly on past injuries is, by its nature, limiting to the Spirit. It does not promote peace.

### A confirming witness

The Holy Ghost will also help us solve crises of faith. The Spirit of the Holy Ghost can be a confirming witness, testifying of heavenly things. Through that Spirit, a strong knowledge distills in one's mind, and one feels all doubt or questions disappear.

The Apostle Paul said, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). He added elsewhere that true Saints are the "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

### The Holy Ghost's sealing power

I wish to say a word about the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the sealing and ratifying power of the Holy Ghost.

To have a covenant or ordinance sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is a compact through which the inherent blessings will be obtained, provided those seeking the blessing are true and faithful (see D&C 76:50–54).

For example, when the covenant of marriage for time and eternity, the culminating gospel ordinance, is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, it can literally open the windows of heaven for great blessings to flow to a married couple who seek for those blessings. Such marriages become rich, whole, and sacred. Though each party to the marriage can maintain his or her separate identity, yet together in their covenants they can be like two vines wound inseparably around each other. Each thinks of his or her companion before thinking of self.

One of the great blessings available through the Holy Spirit of Promise is that all of our covenants, vows, oaths, and performances, which we receive through the ordinances and blessings of the gospel, are not only confirmed but may be sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise. However, that sealing may be broken by unrighteousness. It is also important to remember that if a person undertakes to receive the sealing blessing by deceit, "then the blessing is not sealed, notwithstanding the integrity and authority of the person officiating" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 2:98–99).

To have a covenant or ordinance sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise means that the compact is binding on earth and in heaven.

### **"I will not leave you comfortless"**

It is always gratifying to hear of prayers being answered and miracles occurring in the lives of those who need them. But what of those noble and faithful souls who receive no miracles, whose prayers are not answered in the way they wish? What is their solace? From whence will their comfort come? Said the Savior of the world: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. . . . But the

Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . the Father will send in my name" (John 14:18, 26).

In simple terms, the gift of the Holy Ghost is an enhanced spiritual power permitting those entitled thereto to receive it, to receive a greater knowledge and enjoyment of the influence of Deity.

### **Joseph's counsel to Brigham Young**

In the marvelous experience of Brigham Young in February of 1847, when the Prophet Joseph appeared to him in a dream or vision, Brigham pleaded to be reunited with the Prophet. Brigham Young asked the Prophet if he had a message for the Brethren. The Prophet said:

"Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and to be sure to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the still small voice; it will teach them what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the kingdom. Tell the Brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it."

The Prophet further directed Brigham Young as follows: "They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God" (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young: 1846–47* [Historical Dept., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], pp. 528–31).

### **A constant companion**

If in this life we cannot live in the presence of the Savior as did Simon Peter, James, John, Mary, Martha, and the others, then the gift of the Holy Ghost can be our Comforter and sure compass.

I testify that as we mature spiritually under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, our sense of personal worth, of belonging, and of identity increases. I further testify that I would rather have every person enjoy the Spirit of the Holy Ghost than any

other association, for they will be led by that Spirit to light and truth and pure intelligence, which can carry them back into the presence of God.

I pray that the promise of the Lord will be fulfilled for each of us, that "the Holy Ghost shall be [our] constant companion, and [our] scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and [our] dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto [us] forever and ever" (D&C 121:46). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will

be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats in the Tabernacle no later than 9:15 A.M.

We call your attention to the fact that because of the change to daylight saving time tonight, you should move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire; otherwise, you may come at the wrong time.

We express gratitude to the BYU combined choirs for the beautiful music we have heard this afternoon. They will sing in closing, "How Beautiful upon the Mountain." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

---

The choir sang "How Beautiful upon the Mountain."

Elder L. Aldin Porter offered the benediction.

---

## GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 159th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 1, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by the Ricks College centennial priesthood choir. The choir was directed by Richard Robison and Mike Belnap, with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

### President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love

and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries around the world. We note that Elders Angel Abrea and Glenn L. Rudd are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders James M. Paramore and Gardner H. Russell are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon, the following were sustained as additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Joe J. Christensen, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, and Marlin K. Jensen.

Announcement was also made of the establishment of the Second Quorum of

the Seventy, with the initial membership of the Second Quorum of the Seventy comprising those General Authorities presently serving under a five-year call. The following were sustained as additional members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Carlos H. Amado, Benjamin B. Banks, Spencer J. Condie, F. Melvin Hammond, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, and Horacio A. Tenorio.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the Ricks College centennial priesthood choir, under the direction of Brothers Richard Robison and Mike Belnap, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "Come, Let Us Anew." Following

the singing, Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

---

The choir sang "Come, Let Us Anew."

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi offered the invocation.

---

### President Monson

The choir will now sing the hymn "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

---

The choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

---

## Presentation of Scouting Award to President Benson

### President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, we are honored this evening to have present with us on the stand Mr. Edward C. Joullian III, international commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America and past president of the Boy Scouts of America, and Mr. Eugene F. "Bud" Reid, chairman of the International Committee of the Boy Scouts of America and member of the World Scout Committee. Both Mr. Joullian and Mr. Reid are members of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America.

Also in attendance is Mr. Julian L. Dyke, national director of public affairs, representing Ben H. Love, chief Scout executive of the Boy Scouts of America, who is on assignment abroad.

They have flown a long way to be here, and we welcome them. I now invite these three men to come to the stand.

It is my privilege to call on Mr. Reid to make a most important presentation to President Ezra Taft Benson.

### Eugene F. "Bud" Reid

Thank you, Mr. Monson. There are more than sixteen million Scouts in over 150 countries and territories around the world. In the eighty years since the Scout movement was founded, some 250 million Scouts have benefited from its programs designed to help educate young people to take a constructive place in their society.

The Boy Scouts of America is the largest single Scout association in the world, with almost four million members. The Bronze Wolf is an award instituted by the founder of the world Scout movement, Robert Baden-Powell, and is the only international award given by the World Scout Committee. The award is made for outstanding services given by the individual to Scouting in his own country and internationally.

I request that President Ezra Taft Benson come forward. I am going to read a citation for the award of the Bronze Wolf:

"President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of



Latter-day Saints, member of the Boy Scouts of America Advisory Council.

"President Ezra Taft Benson first joined Scouting as an assistant Scoutmaster and served subsequently as Scoutmaster before graduating through the ranks of adult leadership in a number of regional and national committees and boards.

"He has served with distinction on the National Executive Committee, National Executive Board, and National Council International Committee of the Boy Scouts of America.

"As President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Ezra Taft Benson has exerted vast influence regarding the Church's strong support of Scouting throughout the world. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is today the largest sponsor of

Scouting in the United States, and its relationship with Scouting in other countries is also strong.

"The World Scout Committee confers on President Ezra Taft Benson the award of the Bronze Wolf for outstanding services to the Scout movement."

President Benson, here is your certificate, together with a copy of the citation. Thank you for your leadership and your devotion and commitment to Scouting. It is a well-deserved recognition.

### **President Monson**

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be followed by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## **Elder Richard G. Scott**

I speak to you who want to do right, to you who have had those stirrings in your heart to live worthily no matter what others may say, and to you who want to have such feelings. You are the finest generation that has ever come to earth. We're proud of you. I have a burning desire to communicate truths which, if understood and lived, will fundamentally change your life. I ask you to help me. Will you listen with your mind and your heart, so that my prayer that you will be helped can be answered?

### **Your spiritual flame**

For a piece of wood to catch fire, it must first be heated to a temperature at which it ignites, then burns by itself. The initial heating requires energy from outside. When it is ignited, it becomes self-sustaining and gives beneficial light and heat.

For you, the early years of life are often spent in absorbing help from parents and others as you prepare for the time you

can be more self-sufficient. I want to help you catch fire spiritually, that you may enjoy the marvelous experience of radiating strength to others while you continue to grow and develop yourself.

There is a more intense fire than that of burning wood. It is produced from a mixture of aluminum powder and metal oxide. By itself, it is cold and lifeless, but when heated to the ignition temperature, it becomes a self-sustaining source of brilliant light and intense heat.

Once it ignites it cannot be put out by ordinary means. It will burn under water or in other environments that extinguish an ordinary flame. When it burns, it does not depend on its surroundings for support. It is self-sustaining.

The spiritual flame in some is easily quenched by the world around them. Yet others live so as to be strengthened and nurtured by the Lord. They not only overcome the temptations of the world, their unquenchable spirit enriches the lives of others around them.

## Trust the Lord to help resolve problems

Two missionaries who were aflame spiritually had spent an active day establishing a branch of the Church in a remote village. At 5:30 that morning, they had taught a family before the husband left for the fields. Later they had struggled to plaster their adobe walls to keep out blood-sucking insects. During the week they had laid a small cement floor and had hung a five-gallon can with a shower head to keep clean. They had begun a sanitation facility and put new gravel and sand in their water filter. For part of the day they had worked beside men in the fields to later teach them. They were exhausted and ready for welcome rest.

There came an anxious knock at the crude wooden door. A small girl was crying. She had been running and was gasping for air. They struggled to piece together her message, delivered amid sobs in a torrent of words. Her father had suffered a severe head injury while riding his donkey in the darkness. She knew he would die unless the elders saved his life. Men of the village were at that moment carrying him to the missionaries. She pled for her father's life, then ran to help him.

The seriousness of their desperate situation began to engulf them. They were in a village with no doctors or medical facilities. There were no telephones. The only means of communication was a rough road up a riverbed, and they had no vehicle.

The people of the valley trusted them. The missionaries were not trained in medicine. They did not know how to care for a serious head wound, but they knew someone who did. They knelt in prayer and explained their problem to an understanding Father in Heaven. They pled for guidance, realizing that they could not save a life without His help.

They felt impressed that the wound should be cleansed, closed, and the man given a blessing. One companion asked, "How will he stand the pain? How can we cleanse the wound and bless him while he is in such suffering?"

They knelt again and explained to their Father, "We have no medicine. We have no anesthetic. Please help us to know what to do. Please bless him, Father."

As they arose, friends arrived with the injured man. Even in the subdued candlelight, they could see he had been severely hurt. He was suffering greatly. As they began to cleanse the wound, a very unusual thing occurred. He fell asleep. Carefully, anxiously, they finished the cleansing, closed the wound, and provided a makeshift bandage. As they laid their hands on his head to bless him, he awoke peacefully. Their prayer had been answered, and his life saved. The trust of the people increased, and a branch of the Church flourished.

The missionaries were able to save a life because they trusted the Lord. They knew how to pray with faith for help with a problem they could not resolve themselves. Because they were obedient to the Lord, the Lord trusted them and answered their prayer. They had learned how to recognize the answer when it came as a quiet prompting of the Spirit. You have that same help available to you if you live for it.

The Savior said, "And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20).

## Trust the Lord to protect you

Two young missionaries were walking down a dusty road. In their hands they carried the scriptures, and in each heart burned a desire to share truth. They saw on the ridge of a hill a group of horsemen laughing and pointing toward them. They sensed they were in severe danger. Each prayed for help as a huge man on a powerful horse galloped down the hill toward them. His menacing whip slashed the air and cracked threateningly. He thundered closer. The sneer on his face communicated his cruel intent to harm them. Suddenly, he reined in his horse,

paused, whirled, and disappeared down the valley.

These elders trusted in the Lord and were living worthily. He therefore could protect them against the danger they were helpless to avoid. Your determination to live righteously will make it possible for you to be protected from the dangers that surround you.

### **Don't face the world alone**

I know that each one of you faces overwhelming challenges. Sometimes they are so concentrated, so unrelenting, that you may feel they are beyond your capacity to control.

Don't face the world alone. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

In many ways, the world is like a jungle, with dangers that can harm or mutilate your body, enslave or destroy your mind, or decimate your morality. It was intended that life be a challenge, not so that you would fail, but that you might succeed through overcoming. You face on every hand difficult but vitally important decisions. There is an array of temptations, destructive influences, and camouflaged dangers, the like of which no previous generation has faced. I am persuaded that today no one, no matter how gifted, strong, or intelligent, will avoid serious problems without seeking the help of the Lord.

I repeat: Don't face the world alone. Trust in the Lord.

### **Repent and become clean**

If one of you has seriously sinned, repent — now. It is not good to violate the commandments of the Lord. It is worse to do nothing about it. Sin is like cancer in the body. It will never heal itself. It will become progressively worse unless cured through the medicine of repentance. You can be made completely whole, new, purified, and clean every whit, through the miracle of repentance.

Trust in the Lord. He knows what He is doing. He already knows of your

problems. And He is waiting for you to ask for help.

### **The dangers of selfishness**

Has one of you ever had the feeling you are walking alone down a dark tunnel that gets ever more depressing? No one seems to care? Life gets more and more complicated and discouraging? You may have been following a path many others have trod. It often begins with self-pity, then self-indulgence, and, if not checked, leads to gross selfishness.

Unless overcome by serving others, selfishness leads to serious sin, with its depressing feelings and binding chains. It is the crowbar Satan uses to open a heart to temptation in order to destroy agency. He would bind mind and body through crippling habits and separate us from our Father in Heaven and His Son by cultivating selfishness.

If you have had such feelings of depression, turn around — literally turn your life around. The other end of the tunnel is filled with light. No matter where you have been or what you have done, that light is always available to you. Satan will try to convince you that you have gone too far to be saved. That is a lie. You will need some help to get started. The scriptures are a good place to begin. A father, mother, brother, sister, bishop, or friend will help. As you move nearer the light through repentance, you will feel better about yourself and more confident in your future. You will rediscover how wonderful life really is.

The Savior gave his life that you and I can correct mistakes, even the most serious ones. His plan is perfect. It always works for each one who follows the rules.

### **Build righteous character**

Getting through the hazards of life requires understanding, skill, experience, and self-assurance like that required to sink a difficult basket under pressure. In the game of life, that is called righteous character. Such character is not developed in moments of great challenge or temptation. That is when it is used. Char-

acter is woven quietly from the threads of hundreds of correct decisions (like practice sessions). When strengthened by obedience and worthy acts, correct decisions form a fabric of character that brings victory in time of great need.

Righteous character provides the foundation of spiritual strength that enables you to make difficult, extremely important decisions correctly when they seem overpowering.

Righteous character is what you *are*. It is more important than what you own, what you have learned, or what you have accomplished. It allows you to be trusted. It opens the door to help from the Lord in moments of great challenge or temptation.

### **Act with integrity**

Be honest. Righteous character is based on integrity.

Never lie to yourself. A lie can give temporary advantage, but it brings with it long-term difficulties. Make no premeditated plans to do wrong, no lies to gain advantage, no falsehood to cover mistakes. When you are completely honest with yourself and measure your acts against what you know is right, you will not be dishonest with anyone. Moreover, you will make sure the Lord can bless you when you need it.

When you are tempted to break a commandment and hide it from others, don't do it. It will always hurt you. Satan will see to that. He'll make it known because he wants to destroy you.

You have observed how some of your friends try to live a double standard of life. They want to appear to their parents and church leaders as though they are doing the right things, but secretly they do otherwise. They may have moments of excitement they consider pleasure, but they can never be at peace or truly happy. They fight against themselves internally and run the risk of destroying mind and body.

### **Be the leader in doing right**

When you are alone with your friends, talk about doing good and being good. The feelings you will have, the promptings that will come to you, will powerfully motivate you for good. Those who do wrong and scheme to get away with it will never know such feelings. If you don't feel comfortable with the thought of discussing good with your friends, they are not your friends. Change them.

Each one of us has a natural, powerful desire to be accepted, to be liked, to be somebody.

Years ago, I learned something of the price paid for trust and worthy recognition. During a summer break, I found a job on an oyster boat in Long Island Sound. Four of us lived together in an area not much larger than the cab of a big semitrailer tractor. At first, I was considered a spy for the owner, then a kid who didn't have courage to live like a man. They really gave me a bad time. Finally, when they understood I would not abandon my principles, we became friends. Then privately, one by one, they asked for help.

You know what is right and wrong. Be the leader in doing right. At first, you may not be understood. You may not have the friends you want right away, but in time, they will respect you, then admire you. Many will come privately to receive strength from your spiritual flame. You can do it. I know you can do it.

### **Follow the Spirit's promptings**

When your life complies with the will of the Lord and is in harmony with His teachings, the Holy Ghost is your companion in need. You will be able to be inspired by the Lord to know what to do. When needed, your efforts will be fortified with divine power. Like the missionaries, you can be protected and strengthened to do what alone would be impossible.

As we have talked, some of you have been prompted by the Spirit about

private things the Lord wants you to do something about. You have been impressed to know what to do. Those feelings are the very most important part of our time together. They are a personal message of the Lord to you. Remember that message. Follow it precisely, now, for your happiness.

We love you and trust you. The Lord needs you for His purposes. Live His commandments. Learn to follow the promptings of the Spirit. Keep your spiritual flame burning brightly.

Live to have trust in the Lord. Live to be trusted and helped by Him.

I testify that the Lord lives. He loves you and will help you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

We have just listened to Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us.

## Elder John H. Groberg

### Come unto Christ through the sacrament

One of the most important invitations ever issued to us and to all mankind is to "come unto Christ and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32). How do we do that? One of the most beautiful and important ways is through the ordinance of the sacrament.

The Lord instituted the sacrament, as we know it today, during what we commonly call the Last Supper. In one sense, it was the last supper, but in another, it was the first supper—the beginning of many spiritual feasts.

The resurrected Lord instructed the Book of Mormon people:

"[Ye] shall break bread and bless it and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name.

"And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done. . . .

"And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you" (3 Nephi 18:5–7).

The moving tenderness and deep significance of this transcendent event are still available to us today. But we must do as the early disciples did and follow the

doctrine of Christ, which is to believe in Jesus, rely on him, repent of our sins, take his name upon us by being baptized in his church, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and faithfully follow Christ all of our lives.

He knows we need much help to do this, so he provides that the ordinance of the sacrament be repeated often.

This invitation of the Savior to come unto him is issued regularly and is universal. Everyone is included—men, women, and children. Old and young alike participate. No one is barred except by himself.

The Lord said, "And ye see that I have commanded that none of you should go away, but rather have commanded that ye should come unto me" (3 Nephi 18:25).

### Partake of the sacrament worthily

But the Lord, who knows the terrible consequences of hypocrisy, also warned:

"Ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily. . . .

"For whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul" (3 Nephi 18:28–29).

What does it mean to partake of the sacrament worthily? Or how do we know if we are unworthy?

If we desire to improve (which is to repent) and are not under priesthood restriction, then, in my opinion, we are worthy. If, however, we have no desire to improve, if we have no intention of following the guidance of the Spirit, we must ask: Are we worthy to partake, or are we making a mockery of the very purpose of the sacrament, which is to act as a catalyst for personal repentance and improvement? If we remember the Savior and all he has done and will do for us, we will improve our actions and thus come closer to him, which keeps us on the road to eternal life.

If, however, we refuse to repent and improve, if we do not remember him and keep his commandments, then we have stopped our growth, and that is damnation to our souls.

The sacrament is an intensely personal experience, and we are the ones who knowingly are worthy or otherwise.

### **Blessings of partaking worthily**

Do you remember the feeling you had when you were baptized—that sweet, clean feeling of a pure soul, having been forgiven, washed clean through the merits of the Savior? If we partake of the sacrament worthily, we can feel that way regularly, for we renew that covenant, which includes his forgiveness.

Those who would deny themselves the blessing of the sacrament by not attending sacrament meeting or by not thinking of the Savior during the services surely must not understand the great opportunity to be forgiven, to have his Spirit to guide and comfort them! What more could anyone ask?

### **Repent to become worthy**

As we worthily partake of the sacrament, we will sense those things we need to improve in and receive the help and determination to do so. No matter what our problems, the sacrament always gives hope.

Most of these problems we must work out ourselves. For example, if we aren't paying our tithing, we simply de-

termine to start doing so. But for some problems, we must see our bishop—the Spirit will let us know which. Doing what the Spirit dictates always results in blessings.

Let me give an example. Some years ago, a young couple we will call the Joneses visited with their bishop about a problem the wife had. The details are not important, but through the direction of the Spirit, the bishop's decision was that, among other things, Sister Jones would not partake of the sacrament for a period of time while she worked out some attitudes and problems.

With lots of love and support, she continued to attend meetings with her family, and few but her husband and the bishop were aware of the situation or even noticed that week after week she did not partake of the sacrament. At first she didn't feel much difference; but as time went on, she became more and more desirous to be worthy to partake of the sacrament. She thought she had repented before, but as the real soul-searching deepened and as her desire to worthily partake of the sacrament increased, true fundamental changes began to take place in her life and in her actions and in her thinking.

More time passed. Finally, during one sacrament meeting, the Spirit bore witness to the bishop and to Brother and Sister Jones that the time had come for her to again partake of the sacrament. "Next Sunday," the bishop said.

Next Sunday came, and Sister Jones sat again with her family, nervous, yet excited and full of anticipation. "Am I really worthy? How I want to be!" she thought. The sacrament hymn was more meaningful than ever. She sang with such feeling that it was difficult to hold back the tears. And the sacrament prayers—how profound! She listened so intently that every word sank deep into her soul—to take his name, always remember him, keep his commandments, always have his Spirit (see D&C 20:77, 79). "Oh, how I desire this," she thought.

The deacons began to move up and down the aisles, and the trays were passed from person to person across the rows. As

one young deacon got closer and closer to her row, her heart began to pound harder and harder. Then the tray was coming down her very row. Now her husband was holding the tray in front of her! Tears streamed down her face. There was a barely audible sob of joy, "Oh!" as she reached for the emblem of the Lord's love for her. The congregation did not hear the sob, but they did notice the tears in the bishop's eyes.

Life and hope and forgiveness and spiritual strength had been given and received. No one could be more worthy. Sister Jones truly *wanted* to have his Spirit. She *wanted* to take his name upon her. With all her heart, she *wanted* to remember him and keep his commandments. She *wanted* to repent, to improve, and to follow the guidance of his Spirit.

### **Becoming a people pure in heart**

Think of it. Think of what could and should happen in your life, in your ward, in your stake, in the whole Church, in the whole world, if every Sunday individuals — hundreds, thousands, even millions — under the authority of the priesthood of God, took the sacrament worthily and thus repented and sincerely determined to better follow the guidance of the Lord's Spirit.

The life that would be given, the forgiveness that would be obtained, the spiritual strength that would be received! The light that would thus be generated would cause Zion to shine forth brilliantly and would prepare a people pure in heart, ready for the Lord's second coming in a way that would be marvelous to behold.

### **Responsibilities of priesthood bearers**

Brethren, as leaders we must do more to have more people attend sacrament meeting and partake of the sacrament with more worthiness! We must teach more fully, with deeper feeling and greater power, the doctrine of Christ as embodied in the sacrament.

You young men must be worthy and realize what a privilege you have to pass the bread and water, the emblems of

the Lord's love for all of us. Think of the blessings you offer — hope, love, joy, forgiveness, freedom, and everlasting life. What a contrast to so many youth who today pass other types of white substances and other kinds of liquids that bring gloom and failure, captivity and death in the deceitful guise of happiness! Oh, the goodness and mercy of our God as he overcomes the cunning of the evil one!

### **Emblems of the Lord's love**

I testify from the depths of my soul that these principles are true. Jesus did suffer and die for us. Through him, and only through him, can we have life and the joy thereof, both in time and in eternity.

I love the Savior. I feel that as he hung upon the cross and looked out over the dark scene, he saw more than mocking soldiers and cruel taunters. He saw more than crying women and fearful friends. He remembered and saw even more than women at wells or crowds on hills or throngs by seashores. He saw more, much more. He, who knows all and has all power, saw through the stream of time. His huge, magnanimous, loving soul encompassed all eternity and took in all people and all times and all sins and all forgiveness and all everything. Yes, he saw down to you and to me and provided us an all-encompassing opportunity to escape the terrible consequences of death and sin.

And even as he suffered for all of us, he voiced that most beautiful of all requests, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34).

We must do our part and cry with full fervor of soul, "Father, forgive me through the merits of thy Beloved Son as I partake of these emblems of his broken body and spilt blood for me. Please, Father, through him, forgive me! Help me to do better."

All life as we know it comes about through the joining of two separate elements — each necessary. The Savior, through his infinite atonement, provides that vital element for us. He asks us to

provide the other element—even a broken heart and a contrite spirit—for he will not force us.

Think of the symbolism. Think of the power for bringing about a newness of life by worthily partaking of the sacrament.

I testify that God our Father lives. I testify that Jesus is the Christ. I know he lives. I know he forgives. I know he loves. I know he smiles tenderly, pleadingly. I know he stands ready to help us—always. I know he guides and directs and blesses with unutterable blessings and unspeakable treasures of eternity. I know he gives knowledge of eternally important things if we desire. I know that worthily partaking of the sacrament is of eternal importance to him and to us.

Yes, I know he gives life—in all of its depth of meaning. As the emblems of

his love are regularly presented before us, please let us hear, “Father, forgive them,” and respond, “Father, forgive me.” This leads to life—eternal life—in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “High on the Mountain Top,” following which we shall hear from Elder Russell C. Taylor, a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

---

The choir and congregation sang “High on the Mountain Top.”

---

## Elder Russell C. Taylor

My message tonight is directed to the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. I will admit before all of you: get me to a good football or basketball game, and I’m a happy man. I have four favorite teams. Three of them are professional, and one is a college team. When they win, my wife has a hard time keeping me in my seat. When one of these teams loses, I’m not very friendly (and with some of these teams, I’ve had a lot of practice being unfriendly this year). But, after a night’s sleep, I find it doesn’t really matter—not really.

But when a young man loses in his preparation for life, that really matters—because that has lasting consequences.

### Making points for righteousness

Playing ball is a great deal like life. You want to do your best, to be committed, to be a team player. You want to follow the rules so you don’t foul out. You want to make points.

The rules in real life are different from those in a game. Our rules are the commandments of God. You make points when you serve your mission, draw close to the Lord, live the Word of Wisdom, stay morally clean, and live a life of service and Church activity.

How many points are you making in your life? Are you winning?

When you make a basket in a basketball game or kick a goal in soccer, there’s a great feeling of accomplishment and excitement. The same thing happens when you make gospel points. You feel good about yourself. You also feel closer to the Lord. You feel the excitement of knowing you’re doing what God wants you to do.

You’re in a different league when you’re shooting for gospel points. It’s a celestial league. You’re one of the Lord’s own sons, and he’s depending on you to do your very best. There are forces of good and forces of evil in the world. You represent the Lord as a force for good.



You have come to earth at this time for a special purpose. He has a mission for you to accomplish, a *lifetime* mission.

You're probably going to have a tough opponent to overcome. Sometimes the media, friends, or other influences will try to pull you away from what is right. Choose to stand with the Lord. Join with the valiant prophet Joshua, who declared, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

To win this most important game of all, you need to make *five points*. Let me be your coach for a few minutes. We will talk about plays and assignments—making points for righteousness.

### Serve a mission

The first point to be made is to *serve your mission*.

Be determined to serve a mission. Prepare well for it.

The prophet has asked each young man to serve a mission. That usually involves sacrifice. Ofttimes it means you give up something good for something better. It may mean postponing schooling or an athletic scholarship. It means saving money—for a mission instead of a car.

It also means sacrificing the things of the world. The prophet Moroni tells us, "Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and *deny yourselves of all ungodliness*" (Moroni 10:32; italics added).

The hymn tells us, "Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven" ("Praise to the Man," *Hymns*, no. 27). Do you know that sacrifice purifies our spirits and brings us closer to the Lord?

Serving your mission is more than being called and sharing the gospel with your brothers and sisters for two years. That is important, but your mission is also doing what the Lord wants you to do throughout *all* your life.

A mission can change the quality of your life in ways that you can barely imagine. You will find out what that is only as you serve the Lord.

Serve your mission. Make a point for righteousness.

### Draw close to the Lord

The second point to be made is to *draw close to the Lord*.

How do you make that point? You make it by taking appropriate time to *read the scriptures daily*, having earnest prayer, and fasting. These practices will help your testimony grow.

A seminary student said, "I used to think the scriptures were boring—until I started to read them." At a recent stake conference, a beautiful young woman said in her testimony, "If you think the scriptures are boring, then you are boring." They discovered that the scriptures provide answers to the problems they may face—with friends, at home, or at school. Gospel principles apply to any time period—Old Testament times or today.

The Lord will speak to you through the words of the scriptures. Draw close to the Lord through the scriptures.

Take a *time-out* to *pray each morning* and night and as often in between as needed. That's one of the wonderful gifts the Lord has given you—he's accessible by prayer any time, any place. He's always there for you. Tell him your goals, your troubles. Give him thanks for your blessings. Ask him to teach you how you can help do his work. He hears your prayers. He cares about you. He wants you to succeed in living the gospel. Draw close to the Lord through prayer.

*Fast* the first Sunday of each month and also when you need special help from the Lord. Make it a true fast. Fasting is more than abstaining from food. It is more than helping the needy through fast offerings, important as that is. It is a spiritual law as well, just as is the law of tithing or the Word of Wisdom.

In a sincere fast, we are given an open invitation by the Lord to draw close to him, to open our hearts to him, to feel his Spirit and pure love. It's a time to recommit to obeying his commandments.

You'll find there are points to make as you draw close to the Lord through scripture study, prayer, and fasting. Your

testimony will grow. While many young men today are starving spiritually, you can grow spiritually.

### Live the Word of Wisdom

The third point: this is a tough two-pointer; the defense is all over you. *Live the Word of Wisdom.*

Choose not to use drugs or alcohol before you're tempted. They are destructive to your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Using them is wrong. They can destroy you. With drugs there is a high—but, oh, the risk; for you come down harder and lower after each experience. You can truly end up in the depths of hell. Young men, may you know now that drugs dull your conscience so that you discern less clearly between good and evil.

President David O. McKay said, "Sin can stun the conscience as a blow on the head can stun the physical senses" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 146).

In the Word of Wisdom, the Lord tells us, "In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

Conspiring, evil men want to make money by selling drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. They don't care how much death and pain come as a result. Beware of these merchants of death. Say no to those mind- and body-destroying drugs and chemicals that are ravaging the youth throughout the world. Why indulge when you know they destroy and promise nothing but sorrow? Young men, the ball is in your hands. Make that important goal for righteousness. Live the Word of Wisdom.

### Stay morally clean

Point number four: This is a three-point basket that could win the game. *Stay morally clean.*

Your mission call, your mission in life, and who and where you marry will be influenced by whether you lead a pure and chaste life.

Alma taught his son Shiblon the importance of being morally clean. He said, "See that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love" (Alma 38:12). That is an interesting paradox—true love comes when you bridle your passions, when you use self-control.

You should avoid anything that causes you to lose control of yourself or to lose concern for the welfare of another person.

Sharing affection can be a very positive, pleasing experience and was given to us by the Lord to strengthen the bonds between men and women. It is part of the force that leads us to marriage. The feelings generated can be very strong, but if you don't control them, they'll control you.

To be prepared for your life's mission, you must purify your thoughts and feelings. *You* have the power to decide, deliberately and intentionally, what images you entertain in your mind and what emotions you feel in your heart.

Movies and television often portray premarital sex as an appropriate expression of love between a man and a woman. This is a lie. Sex outside of marriage becomes an expression of selfishness, lack of self-control, and lack of concern for the other person. These actions will bring you unhappiness and are condemned by God.

Protect the chastity of young women as you would protect your own life. We hold you priesthood bearers responsible, first and foremost.

Live a morally clean life. Make that winning point for righteousness.

### Live a life of service and Church activity

Point number five is to *live a life of service and Church activity.*

Be committed to activity in the Church and balance this with service. Service opens windows in your life instead of just mirrors that always reflect yourself.

Do more than just attend your meetings—get involved in living and enjoying the gospel. Be a loyal and supportive member of your Aaronic Priesthood

quorum and prepare well for the day when you will hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, the priesthood after the order of the Son of God.

Of deepest concern in all of your activities is whether you have private prayer, whether you read the scriptures daily as the prophet, President Benson, has asked you to do, and whether you agree with your parents and leaders about important spiritual matters. These are the kinds of things that really determine whether or not you have a testimony and the spiritual stamina to finish the game of life.

Now, my young friends, there will be other points you can make for righteousness, too; but I ask you, can you make these five points? Do you have the determination to do your best, to live by the rules, to strengthen your courage and testimony? I know you can. But please, wake up! You are the youth of the noble birthright.

### **The Lord will help when we err**

There may be some among you who have fouled out. You've broken the rules, gotten offside, moved before the snap,

fumbled the ball. The ball — the gospel — is in your hands. Know that a loving Heavenly Father understands your weaknesses and wants you back on his team. Talk to your bishop. He will help you come back. You are needed and loved.

Now, young men, I speak as your friend, not as your judge. Practice these five points in your life. Write them down. Put them where you can see them daily. Check your progress frequently. There are points to win and blessings to obtain.

You priesthood leaders and fathers, you are the home-field coaches. Review these points with these, your sons. Discuss them in depth. Help these young men work on them. Making these points will help lead them to joy and happiness and exaltation. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

Elder Russell C. Taylor, a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

President Benson has asked that I take the opportunity to address you at this time.

## **President Thomas S. Monson**

### **Great expectations**

Brethren, you are an inspiring sight to behold. It is awesome to realize that in thousands of chapels throughout the world at this hour, your fellow holders of the priesthood of God are receiving this broadcast by way of satellite transmission. Your nationalities vary, and your languages are many, but a common thread binds us together. We have been entrusted to bear the priesthood and to act in the name of God. We are the recipients of a sacred trust. Much is expected of us.

Long ago, the renowned author Charles Dickens wrote of opportunities that await. In his classic volume entitled *Great Expectations*, Dickens described a boy by the name of Philip Pirrip, more commonly known as "Pip." Pip was born

in unusual circumstances. He was an orphan. He never met his mother or father. He never saw a picture of them. Yet he had all the normal desires of a boy. He wished with all his heart that he were a scholar. He wished that he were a gentleman. He wished that he were less ignorant. Yet all of his ambitions and all of his hopes seemed doomed to failure. Do you young men sometimes feel that way? Do those of us who are older entertain these same thoughts?

Then one day a London lawyer by the name of Jaggers approached little Pip and told him that an unknown benefactor had bequeathed to him a fortune. The lawyer put his arm around the shoulder of Pip and said to him, "My boy, you have great expectations."

Tonight, as I look at you young men and realize who you are and what you may become, I say to you, as that lawyer said to Pip, "My boy, you have great expectations"—not as the result of an unknown benefactor, but as the result of a known Benefactor, even our Heavenly Father, and great things are expected of you.

### **Remember from whence you came**

All of us, before the period known as mortality, lived as spirit children of our Heavenly Father. In His wisdom, He has given us a record, in the book of Abraham, which tells us something of that existence:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; . . .

"And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever" (Abraham 3:22, 24–26).

As we journey through mortality, let us remember from whence we came; let us be true to the trust vested in us. Let us remember who we are and what God expects us to become.

### **Children of promise, men of might**

Ned Winder, a lifelong friend and formerly the executive secretary of the Missionary Department, tells of an amusing and humbling encounter which he experienced.

Two of the General Authorities, accompanied by Brother Winder, were

walking down a staircase in view of a mother and her son, who were sitting on a couch facing the staircase. Seeing the brethren approach, the boy said to his mother, "Who is that first man?"

She replied, "He is Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles."

The boy continued, "Who is the man next to him?"

Mother replied, "He is Elder Loren Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy."

Then the boy concluded, "Who is the other man?"

The mother spoke more softly, yet she was still audible to Brother Winder: "Oh, he's nobody."

Remember, my young friends, you are somebody! You are a child of promise. You are a man of might. You are a son of God, endowed with faith, gifted with courage, and guided by prayer. Your eternal destiny is before you. The Apostle Paul speaks to you today as he spoke to Timothy long years ago: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee. . . . O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Timothy 4:14; 6:20).

### **Overcome the enemy of self-defeat**

As you define your goals and plan for their achievement, ponder the thought: The past is behind—learn from it; the future is ahead—prepare for it; the present is here—live in it.

At times, all of us let that enemy of achievement—even the culprit, self-defeat—dwarf our aspirations, smother our dreams, cloud our vision, and wreck our lives. The enemy's voice whispers in our ears, "I can't do it." "I'm too little." "Everyone is watching." "I'm nobody." This is when we need to reflect on the counsel of Maxwell Maltz, who declared that "the most . . . realistic self-image of all is to conceive of yourself as 'made in the image of God.'" You cannot sincerely hold this conviction without experiencing a profound new sense of strength and power (*Psycho-Cybernetics* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960], p. 245).

This is good medicine for all of us — young and old. After all, men are but boys grown older. One wife said of her husband, as he admiringly gazed at his new boat, “The bigger the boy, the bigger the toy!”

Life was never intended to consist of a glut of luxury, to be an easy course or filled only with success. There are those games which we lose, those races in which we finish last, and those promotions which never come. Such experiences provide an opportunity for us to show our determination and to rise above disappointment.

I read the other day about an athlete who is a member of LaSalle University’s wrestling team. Due to a shooting accident which occurred many years ago, he has but one leg. Does he complain? Does he curse God? Does he withdraw from the match? On the contrary, he competes with the best of them. His record this year is ten wins and eight losses. A teammate said of him, “He inspires us.”

Like some of you, I know what it is to face disappointment and youthful humiliation. As a boy, I played team softball in elementary and junior high school. Two captains were chosen, and then they, in turn, selected the players they desired on their teams. Of course, the best players were chosen first, then second and third. To be selected fourth or fifth was not too bad, but to be chosen last and relegated to a remote position in the outfield was downright awful. I know. I was there.

How I hoped that the ball would never be hit in my direction, for surely I would drop it, runners would score, and teammates would laugh.

As though it were just yesterday, I remember the moment when all that changed in my life. The game started out as I have described: I was chosen last. I made my sorrowful way to the deep pocket of right field and watched as the other team filled the bases with runners. Two batters then went down on strikes. Suddenly, the next batter hit a mighty drive. The ball was coming in my direction. Was it beyond my reach? I raced for the spot where I thought the ball would drop, uttered a silent prayer as I ran, and

stretched forth my cupped hands. I surprised myself. I caught the ball! My team won the game.

This one experience bolstered my confidence, inspired my desire to practice, and led me from that last-to-be-chosen place to become a real contributor to the team.

We can experience that burst of confidence. We can feel that pride of performance. A three-word formula will help us: *Never give up.*

### Choose the right

Opposition is ever with us. The temptation to detour from our chosen path is at times a daily confrontation. Joseph L. Townsend wrote the words of a hymn which we sing frequently:

Choose the right when a choice is  
placed before you.  
In the right the Holy Spirit guides;  
And its light is forever shining o’er  
you,  
When in the right your heart confides.  
 (“Choose the Right,” *Hymns*, no. 239)

A wise father, speaking to his son, placed the question of choice in a direct setting. He counseled, “Son, if you ever find yourself in a place you shouldn’t ought to be — *get out!*” Good advice for a son. Good advice for a father, too.

Altogether too frequently we are prone to place the blame on Lucifer for every temptation we encounter or every sin we commit. The words of the Apostle Paul place in perspective such thinking. To the Corinthians, Paul counseled,

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

### Importance of prayer

As priesthood holders, we have a responsibility to “stand up and be counted.” Some years back, when David Kennedy was appointed as secretary of the trea-

Saturday, April 1

First Day

sure, a reporter attempted to entrap him with the question, "Mr. Kennedy, do you believe in prayer?"

The response was, "I do."

Then the clever question, "Mr. Kennedy, do you pray?"

Came the firm reply, "I believe in prayer, and I pray!"

Just this past month, a mammoth 747 jetliner, while flying over the Pacific, sustained a gigantic tear in its side, ejecting nine passengers to their deaths and threatening the lives of all. When the pilot, Captain David Cronin, was interviewed, having brought the craft back safely to Honolulu, he was asked, "What did you do when the plane ripped open? How did you cope?"

Captain Cronin replied, "I prayed, then went to work."

My brethren, this is an inspired plan for each of us to follow: Pray, and then go to work.

### **The commitment to serve**

In the helter-skelter competitiveness of life, there is a tendency to think only of ourselves. To succumb to this philosophy narrows one's vision and distorts a proper view of life. When concern for others replaces concern for self, our own progress is enhanced.

Tonight we have witnessed the highest honor Scouting is able to bestow, conferred upon our President, Ezra Taft Benson. This recognition is not a response to a single deed or a temporary commitment to service. Rather, it recognizes a lifetime of constant and selfless service to youth. It was said of our Lord, "He went about doing good." President Ezra Taft Benson daily exemplifies this example of the Lord.

At the February meeting of the National Executive Board of Scouting, young men were recognized who had saved the lives of others during the past year. One of those so honored was an Aaronic Priesthood bearer — fifteen-year-old Thomas T. Nelson from Lacey, Washington. Tom had rescued two boys from a raging river which could have carried them to their deaths. I love his

humble-yet-powerful response to the recognition: "I jumped in and pulled them out!"

Thousands of Scouts became heroes by blessing the lives of others during the campaign noted as "Scouting for Food." On a given Saturday, with the campaign having been previously publicized, the homemakers of America were asked to contribute canned food to feed the hungry. Scouts became the facilitators of this objective. Hundreds of tons of food were collected, stored, and distributed. Those who gave were blessed. Those who received were fed. Those Scouts who helped to achieve the objective will never again be the same. They went about doing good.

Serving throughout the world is a great missionary force going about doing good. Missionaries teach truth. They dispel darkness. They spread joy. They bring precious souls to Christ.

### **A modern miracle**

Just a few weeks ago, in Guatemala City, Guatemala, I witnessed a modern miracle — even the result of God's guidance given to His servants and the blessing of His people.

At a regional conference, almost twelve thousand members filled the Estadio del Ejercito, the local soccer stadium. The sun bathed with its rays the large gathering, while the Spirit of the Lord filled every heart. This was a day of thanksgiving, marking the forty-second anniversary of the arrival of the first missionaries to that land. John Forbes O'Donnal spoke to the vast throng. He it was who, in 1946, stood alone as the only member of the Church in that nation. Personally importuning then President George Albert Smith, Brother O'Donnal facilitated the entry of the first missionaries. His wife, Carmen Galvez de O'Donnal, became the first convert and was baptized on November 13, 1948. This day of conference, as throughout the years of their marriage, she sat by her husband's side.

While President O'Donnal spoke, my thoughts drifted back to the many

missionaries who had come to this land and the hardships they endured, the sacrifices they made, and the lives they blessed. The experience of one describes the devotion of all. While I have, on a previous occasion, mentioned the experience of this missionary, following my recent visit to Guatemala I felt impressed to share it with you once again.

While serving in Guatemala as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Randall Ellsworth survived a devastating earthquake, which hurled a beam down on his back, paralyzing his legs and severely damaging his kidneys. He was the only American injured in the quake, which claimed the lives of some eighteen thousand persons.

After receiving emergency medical treatment, Elder Ellsworth was flown to a large hospital near his home in Rockville, Maryland. While he was confined there, a newscaster conducted with him an interview that I witnessed through the miracle of television. The reporter asked, "Can you walk?"

The answer, "Not yet, but I will."

"Do you think you will be able to complete your mission?"

Came the reply: "Others think not, but I will. With the President of my church praying for me, and through the prayers of my family, my friends, and my missionary companions, I will walk, and I will return to Guatemala. The Lord wanted me to preach the gospel there for two years, and that's what I intend to do."

There followed a lengthy period of therapy, punctuated by silent yet heroic courage. Little by little, the feeling began to return to the almost lifeless limbs. More therapy, more courage, more prayer.

At last Randall Ellsworth walked aboard the plane that carried him back to the mission to which he had been called, back to the people whom he loved. He left behind a trail of skeptics and a host of doubters, but also hundreds amazed at the power of God, the miracle of faith, and the reward of determination.

In Guatemala, Randall pursued his responsibilities. He walked with the use of two canes. His walk was slow and de-

liberate. Then one day, as he stood before his mission president, Randall Ellsworth heard him speak the almost unbelievable words, "You have been the recipient of a miracle. Your faith has been rewarded. If you have the necessary confidence, if you have abiding faith, if you have supreme courage, place those two canes on my desk — and walk."

Slowly, Randall placed one cane and then the other on the mission president's desk, turned toward the door and toward his future — and walked.

Today, Randall Ellsworth is a practicing physician. He is a stalwart husband and a loving father. His mission president was none other than John Forbes O'Donnal — the man who helped bring to Guatemala the word of the Lord, the leader who on Sunday, March 5, 1989, addressed the throng assembled for regional conference.

Forbes O'Donnal visited my office not long ago and, in his modest manner, recounted his experience with Randall Ellsworth. He then said to me, "Together we have witnessed a miracle. I have kept one of the two canes placed upon my desk that day when I challenged Elder Ellsworth to walk without them. I would like you to have the other." With a friendly smile, he departed the office and returned home to Guatemala.

This is the cane given to me. It serves as a silent witness of our Heavenly Father's ability to hear our prayers and to bless our lives. It is a symbol of faith. It is a reminder of courage.

### **Strive to attain eternal life**

Brethren of the priesthood, like the Charles Dickens character Philip Pirrip, we have great expectations. The goal of eternal life awaits. May we strive unflinchingly to attain it. In the language of the young men assembled tonight, "Let's go for it!" In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

We shall now be privileged to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Hinckley speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

Because daylight saving time begins at 2:00 A.M. tonight, we encourage you to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to you young men of the Ricks College centen-

nial priesthood choir for your beautiful presentation of the music this evening. President Benson turned to President Hinckley and then to me and said, "This is a powerful choir." I said, "President, they are from Idaho." He said, "I know it!"

Following President Hinckley's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Rise Up, O Men of God." The benediction will be offered by Elder Lynn A. Sorensen of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren, this has been a great meeting. I add my congratulations to our beloved President, Ezra Taft Benson, on the recognition he has received. It is an honor well deserved, and it compliments not only him but also the entire Church.

It is a great tribute to the consistency of his life. I congratulate the Scout organizations in selecting a man whose entire life has been a shining example of the finest teachings of Scouting. He is now in his ninetieth year, and as I think of his life, I see an undeviating pattern of adherence to principle. He has kept the faith. He has lived the commandments. He has been persuasive with all of us in his urging that we do likewise.

### Reflection on Scout meetings

It has been a long time since I have been in a Scout troop meeting. I am not familiar with the present agenda for those meetings. But I do have vivid recollections of the way in which they were conducted when I was a boy. I became a Scout in 1922, nearly sixty-seven years ago. At that time there was no Cub program. A boy had to be twelve before he could enroll in Scouting. We met in our troop meeting on Tuesday evening. We were a noisy group as we assembled. Our

Scoutmaster, Charlie Robinson, would blow his whistle, and we would all fall in line. We would raise our right arm to the square and repeat together the Scout Oath: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

It was something of a ritual each Tuesday. We did not think about it very deeply, but the words of that oath became fixed in our minds. They have remained with me through all of these years.

### Pledge to magnify the priesthood

Now, this is not a Scout meeting tonight, although some wonderful things have been said about Scouting. It is a priesthood meeting. For the purposes of this meeting, I should like to suggest another pledge for every man and boy assembled in this great gathering wherever you may be: "On my honor I will do my best to magnify the priesthood of God which has been conferred upon me."

That word *magnify* is interesting. As I interpret it, it means to enlarge, to make more clear, to bring closer, and to strengthen.



## A comparison to binoculars

I have here a pair of binoculars. I treasure them not only for their practical value, but also for sentimental reasons. They are useful in enlarging objects at which I might look. They are also a reminder of a good and great man who magnified his priesthood. They were given to me in 1962, at the conclusion of a wonderful series of meetings with all of our missionaries then in Europe and the British Isles, by President Henry D. Moyle, who was a Counselor in the First Presidency. Whenever I use them, I think of the gift as well as the giver.

All of you, of course, are familiar with binoculars. When you put the lenses to your eyes and focus them, you magnify and in effect bring closer all within your field of vision. But if you turn them around and look through the other end, you diminish and make more distant that which you see.

So it is with our actions as holders of the priesthood. When we live up to our high and holy calling, when we show love for God through service to fellowmen, when we use our strength and talents to build faith and spread truth, we magnify our priesthood. When, on the other hand, we live lives of selfishness, when we indulge in sin, when we set our sights only on the things of the world rather than on the things of God, we diminish our priesthood.

## Lift, strengthen, serve, and give

Jacob, the brother of Nephi, in speaking of the call which he and his brother Joseph had received, said, "And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence" (Jacob 1:19).

To every officer, to every teacher in this Church who acts in a priesthood office, there comes the sacred responsibility of magnifying that priesthood calling. Each of us is responsible for the welfare and the growth and development of others. We do not live only unto ourselves. If

we are to magnify our callings, we cannot live only unto ourselves. As we serve with diligence, as we teach with faith and testimony, as we lift and strengthen and build convictions of righteousness in those whose lives we touch, we magnify our priesthood. To live only unto ourselves, on the other hand, to serve grudgingly, to give less than our best effort to our duty, diminishes our priesthood just as looking through the wrong lenses of binoculars reduces the image and makes more distant the object.

## Teach the word of God

Jacob said further, "Now, my beloved brethren, . . . according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine office with soberness, [I] declare unto you the word of God" (Jacob 2:2).

Every missionary has the responsibility to magnify his calling in teaching the plan of God. Every teacher has the responsibility to magnify his calling in teaching the word of God. Every officer has the responsibility to magnify his calling in teaching the order of God.

Said the Lord in this dispensation to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, "Magnify thine office" (D&C 24:3).

Further, "Attend to thy calling and thou shalt have wherewith to magnify thine office" (D&C 24:9).

In that same revelation the Lord said concerning Oliver Cowdery some interesting and remarkable things:

"In me he shall have glory, and not of himself, whether in weakness or in strength, whether in bonds or free;

"And at all times, and in all places, he shall open his mouth and declare my gospel as with the voice of a trumpet, both day and night. And I will give unto him strength such as is not known among men" (D&C 24:11-12).

## Experiences of Oliver Cowdery

Oliver, with Joseph Smith, received the Aaronic Priesthood under the hands of John the Baptist, and subsequently the

Melchizedek Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James, and John. He magnified that priesthood as a witness to the Book of Mormon, as a Counselor to the Prophet, as one to select the Twelve Apostles and to instruct them, as a missionary in moving the Church across the frontiers of the western territories, and as a teacher and speaker whose voice rang with great and persuasive power.

But he turned and began to look through the wrong end of the lens. He found fault. He complained. His calling shrank, he diminished his priesthood, he distanced himself from those in authority in the Church.

Gone was the voice of persuasion, gone was the power of the priesthood of God which he once held and magnified. For eleven years, he walked almost alone, without friends. He walked in poverty and in sickness.

Then in the fall of 1848, he and his family made their way to Council Bluffs and found themselves again among many of the Saints who at that time were moving to the West. At a conference held in Kanesville on the 24th of October, 1848, he stood and said:

"Friends and Brethren:

"My name is Cowdery—Oliver Cowdery. In the history of the Church I stood . . . in her councils. Not because I was better than other men was I called . . . to fill the purposes of God. He called me to a high and holy calling. I wrote with my own pen the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and he translated it by the power and gift of God, by means of the Urim and Thummim, or as it is called by that book, 'Holy Interpreter'.

"I beheld with my eyes and handled with my hands, the gold plates from which it was translated. . . . That book is true, Sidney Rigdon did not write it; Mr. Spaulding did not write it; I wrote it myself as it fell from the lips of the Prophet. . . .

"I was present with Joseph when an Holy Angel from Heaven came down and conferred upon us . . . the Aaronic Priesthood, and said to us, at the same time,

that it should remain on earth while the earth stands. I was also present with Joseph when the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred by the Holy Angels from on high. . . .

"Brethren, for a number of years, I have been separated from you. I now desire to come back. I wish to come humble and be one in your midst. I seek no station. I only wish to be identified with you. I am out of the Church, but I wish to become a member. I wish to come in at the door: I know the door, I have not come here to seek precedence. I come humbly and throw myself upon the decision of the body, knowing as I do, that its decisions are right" (in Stanley R. Gunn, *Oliver Cowdery: Second Elder and Scribe* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962], pp. 203-4).

He was accepted. He was baptized again. He longed to gather with the Saints in the valleys of the mountains, but he died March 3, 1850, without ever realizing that dream.

His is one of the most touching, pathetic stories in the history of this great work. So long as he magnified his calling, he was magnified. When he diminished that calling, he shrank to oblivion and poverty. He came back, but he never regained his previous stature. He never regained the incomparable promise given him by the Lord that, conditioned upon his faithfulness, he should have glory and be given "strength such as is not known among men" (D&C 24:12).

### The Lord's promises

Magnificent and moving is the promise to every man and boy who magnifies his calling as a holder of the priesthood. Said the Lord concerning you, they are to be "sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God" (D&C 84:33-34).

Further, all that the Father hath shall be given unto them.

There is no greater promise than this. I have seen and known such men. I

met some such the other day when I was at the St. George Temple. I have known and watched these brethren for many years. Their hair is now white, and they do not walk with that vitality which was once their characteristic. Those of whom I speak have never had much of wealth. But they have had much of wisdom, and they have had much of faith. They are men who since the days of their youth have held the priesthood of God, have walked in its light, and have magnified their callings. They have left home at personal sacrifice to serve as missionaries and as mission presidents. They have served as bishops and presidents of stakes. Wherever they have gone, whether in their vocational or ecclesiastical callings, they have touched a candle with the flame of their own faith and brought light where before there was darkness.

In season and out of season, in sunshine and in storm, in defeat as well as in victory, they have kept their eyes at the right end of the lens, magnifying their callings and bringing closer, as it were, the sacred and eternal things of God.

### **Teach true and sound doctrine**

How do we do this? How do we enlarge the power of the priesthood with which we have been endowed? We do it when we teach true and sound doctrine. The Lord has said, "And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77).

We diminish that calling, we shrink that mission when we spend our time speculating about or advocating that which is not set forth in the scripture or that which is not espoused by the prophet of the Lord. Rather, ours is the responsibility, as set forth in revelation, "to bind up the law and seal up the testimony, and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come; That their souls may escape the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination which awaits the wicked, both in this world and in the world to come" (D&C 88:84-85).

### **Serve with diligence and enthusiasm**

We magnify our priesthood and enlarge our calling when we serve with diligence and enthusiasm in those responsibilities to which we are called by proper authority. I emphasize the words *diligence* and *enthusiasm*. This work has not reached its present stature through indifference on the part of those who have labored in its behalf. The Lord needs men, both young and old, who will carry the banners of His kingdom with positive strength and determined purpose.

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?

Now is the time to show.

We ask it fearlessly:

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?

("Who's on the Lord's Side?"

*Hymns*, no. 260)

### **Reach out and give strength**

We magnify our calling, we enlarge the potential of our priesthood when we reach out to those in distress and give strength to those who falter. To you and to me, who have been clothed with the authority of the holy priesthood, the Lord has said, "Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5).

There is so much of distress in this world. There are those, so many of them, who cry out in loneliness and fear with a desperate need for listening ears and understanding hearts. There are single parents struggling to rear families. There are houses that need painting, yards that need cleaning, whose owners have neither the strength nor the means to get it done. There are strong young men among us. There are thousands of you in these congregations tonight, young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, who can bless others and be blessed while giving such service.

### **Walk in honesty and virtue**

We magnify our calling when we walk with honesty and integrity. We

shrink it when we stoop to devious acts and selfishness, disregarding the interests and well-being of others as we spend all of our time to accumulate that which we cannot take with us from this life to the next.

We honor our priesthood and magnify its influence when we walk in virtue and fidelity. Immorality and infidelity are totally inconsistent with the priesthood of God. The boy who has the strength to say no to drugs, the youth who has the strength to say no to beer and other forms of alcohol, the young man who has the strength to say no to immorality, magnifies his calling as a deacon, or teacher, or priest. The older man who can do likewise, the husband who is absolutely true, undeviatingly so, to the companion to whom he is married; the father who never abuses a child, sexually or in any other way—these are men who magnify the priesthood to which they have been ordained with power from on high. Those who do otherwise shrink that power. They may have been ordained, but as the Lord has declared:

“When we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.

“Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to

persecute the saints, and to fight against God” (D&C 121:37–38).

Strong words, those—but as true as the sunlight in the morning. I have seen such men. I have seen them fall and shrivel until today they wallow in a slough of misery and evil with hate-filled hearts.

### Work from the godly perspective

To each of us the Lord has said, “Magnify your calling.” It is not always easy. But it is always rewarding. It blesses him who holds this divine authority. On the other hand, looking through the wrong lens shrinks and shrivels our power and diminishes our contribution. In working from the opposite perspective, the true and the natural and the godly perspective, we enlarge and lift, we grow in strength and gladness, we bless the lives of others now and forever.

My brethren, I bear witness and testimony of these things. I bear testimony of this divine power which you and I hold. It comes from God our Eternal Father and is exercised in the name of His Beloved Son. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

---

The choir sang “Rise Up, O Men of God.”

Elder Lynn A. Sorensen offered the benediction.

---

## SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 159th Annual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 2, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang “Come, Rejoice” without announcement.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this, the fourth general session of the 159th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this and all sessions of the conference, has asked that I conduct this meeting.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders John K. Carmack and Douglas H. Smith are seated on the stand. We extend our greetings to those of you participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations that are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have

assembled to worship and to counsel together.

The Tabernacle Choir is providing the music for this session under the direction of Brothers Jerold D. Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir opened by singing "Come, Rejoice" and will now sing "Cast Thy Burden upon the Lord," following which Elder H. Burke Peterson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

---

The choir sang "Cast Thy Burden upon the Lord."

Elder H. Burke Peterson offered the invocation.

---

## President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker.

## President Thomas S. Monson

In the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we read the Lord's promise:

"Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high. . . . Hearken ye people from afar. . . .

"For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. . . .

"And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.

"And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them" (D&C 1:1-2, 4-5).

Exactly fifty years ago, in 1939, the heads of state in Europe solemnly returned their position papers to leather

briefcases, arose from their chairs at the conference table, and returned to their respective countries. Peace had perished. Mighty armies crossed international borders. Warplanes droned overhead; giant tanks lumbered forward. World War II had begun.

Hundreds of missionaries were withdrawn from Europe and reassigned elsewhere in the world. The membership of the Church in those areas, now deprived of missionary leadership, carried on valiantly. Carnage, suffering, and death enveloped Europe.

After six terrible years, the conflict ceased and a mammoth rebuilding effort was commenced. Missionaries returned to some nations, the gospel was taught, and the Church began to grow.

In other countries, new political boundaries sprang up, borders bristled with armaments, and missionaries were

denied entry. Our members there endured a period marked by patient waiting, fervent praying, and faithful living.

### **Ministry to the German Democratic Republic**

In October 1988, as my plane droned onward to Berlin, my thoughts were upon these nations and my heart felt concern for their people, particularly our own members who had unflinchingly borne their burdens and suffered in silence. I sat back somewhat in reverie, contemplating my lengthy assignment to the German Democratic Republic. For twenty years this had been a vital part of my ministry. My mind filled with memories. My heart overflowed with gratitude to God. I reflected on the history of the Church in the land to which I was going.

### **Effects of World War II**

Prior to World War II, the nation we now know as the German Democratic Republic, and which some erroneously term East Germany, was the most productive area of the German-speaking world as pertained to missionary success. The city of Chemnitz, now Karl-Marx-Stadt, had as many as six large branches of members and was the greatest concentration of Latter-day Saints outside of North America. Then came the terrible destruction of World War II. After the bombs ceased and the artillery fell silent, the land was left devastated. Then, like moles from the earth came the people, bedraggled, hungry, frightened, lost. In memory one could hear the cry, "Mother, where are you? Father, where have you gone?" They were greeted by nothing but a moonscape of shell holes, jagged buildings, giant craters, and mountains of rubble. A nation lay desolate and destroyed.

### **Elder Benson's rescue mission**

About that time, the prophet of the Lord determined that one named Ezra Taft Benson would undertake a rescue mission to the struggling people. Elder

Benson left his dear wife, whom he loves with all his heart, left his precious children, who were tiny at the time, and went on a mission, the length of which was uncertain. He traversed the land of German-speaking Europe—east and west. He fed the people. He clothed the people. He blessed the people. And he gave them hope. His record of service was a foundation for the progress which followed.

Another great benefactor of our German-speaking members is Walter Stover. Freely he has shared his life and generously given of his means to lift the people.

### **A prophetic promise**

In 1968 when I made my first visit to the German Democratic Republic, tensions were high. Trust and understanding did not exist. No diplomatic relations had been established. On a cloudy and rain-filled day I journeyed to the city of Görlitz, situated deep in the German Democratic Republic near the Polish and Czech borders. I attended my first meeting with the Saints. We assembled in a small and ancient building. As the members sang the hymns of Zion, they literally filled the hall with their faith and devotion.

My heart was filled with sorrow when I realized the members had no patriarch, no wards or stakes—just branches. They could not receive temple blessings—either endowment or sealing. No official visitor had come from Church headquarters in a long time. The members could not leave their country. Yet they trusted in the Lord with all their hearts.

I stood at the pulpit, and with tear-filled eyes and a voice choked with emotion, I made a promise to the people: "If you will remain true and faithful to the commandments of God, every blessing any member of the Church enjoys in any other country will be yours." Then I realized what I had said. That night, I dropped to my knees and pleaded with my Heavenly Father, "Father, I'm on Thy errand; this is Thy Church. I have spoken words that came not from me but from

Thee and Thy Son. Wilt Thou fulfill the promise in the lives of this noble people." Thus concluded my first visit to the German Democratic Republic.

The Lord's promise began to unfold. A patriarch was named: Brother Percy K. Fetzer, who also was assigned as a Regional Representative for the area. Then Walter Krause, a native of that country, was ordained a patriarch. To date he has given 989 patriarchal blessings, and his wife has typed every one of them.

Time and again I paid visits to that nation. I recall leadership meetings in which the priesthood leaders eagerly ran to the front when their names were called to obtain printed instructions concerning how a quorum should operate or how a branch should function.

I remember going to a conference in the city of Annaberg. There, a sweet, older sister came forward and asked, "Are you an Apostle?"

When I answered, "Yes," she reached in her purse and brought forth a picture of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. She asked, "Which one are you?"

I looked at the picture. The junior member of the Quorum of the Twelve in that picture was Elder John A. Widtsoe. She had not seen a member of the Twelve for a very long time!

Soon a member mission organization was established, the first high priest ordained, and district councils organized. In Freiberg there was created a stake of Zion and then another stake in Leipzig. Each member of the Church in the German Democratic Republic now belonged to a stake of the Church. One branch president whom I interviewed had served in this capacity for twenty-one years. He was only forty-two years of age. Half his life he had been a branch president, yet he was willing to carry on in any assignment. The members eagerly accepted their calls.

### **A special dedication of the land**

These remarkable events were preceded by a special dedication of the land.

On a Sunday morning, April 27, 1975, I stood on an outcropping of rock

situated between the cities of Dresden and Meissen, high above the Elbe River, and offered a prayer on the land and its people. That prayer noted the faith of the members. It emphasized the tender feelings of many hearts filled with an overwhelming desire to obtain temple blessings. A plea for peace was expressed. Divine help was requested. I spoke the words: "Dear Father, let this be the beginning of a new day for the members of Thy Church in this land."

Suddenly, from far below in the valley, a bell in a church steeple began to chime and the shrill crow of a rooster broke the morning silence, each heralding the commencement of a new day. Though my eyes were closed, I felt a warmth from the sun's rays reaching my face, my hands, my arms. How could this be? An incessant rain had been falling all morning.

At the conclusion of the prayer, I gazed heavenward. I noted a ray of sunshine which streamed from an opening in the heavy clouds, a ray which engulfed the spot where our small group stood. From that moment I knew divine help was at hand.

### **The Freiberg Temple: a miracle**

The work moved forward. The paramount blessing needed was the privilege of our worthy members to receive their endowments and their sealings.

We explored every possibility. A trip once in a lifetime to the temple in Switzerland? Not approved by the government. Perhaps mother and father could come to Switzerland, leaving the children behind. Not right. How do you seal children to parents when they cannot kneel at an altar? It was a tragic situation. Then, through the fasting and the prayers of many members, and in a most natural manner, government leaders proposed: Rather than having your people go to Switzerland to visit a temple, why don't you build a temple here in the German Democratic Republic? The proposal was accepted, a choice parcel of property obtained in Freiberg, and ground broken for a beautiful temple of God.

The day of dedication was an historic occasion. President Gordon B. Hinckley offered the dedicatory prayer. Heaven was close that day.

For its size, this temple is one of the busiest temples in the Church. It is the only temple where one makes an appointment to participate in an endowment session. It is the only temple I know of where stake presidents say, "What can we do? Our home teaching is somewhat down because everyone is in the temple!" When I heard that comment, I thought, "Not bad — not bad at all!"

### The need for missionaries

A miracle of miracles had taken place. One more was needed. How can the Church grow without missionaries? How can our numbers increase despite an aging population? Beautiful new buildings grace the land: stake centers at Leipzig and Dresden, and chapels in Freiberg and Zwickau, with others to follow, such as a chapel under construction in the city of Plauen. A faithful brother from Plauen wrote me this poignant letter: "My parents and grandparents have served before us in this branch, but never thus far has it been possible to have our own meeting-house. Now a long-cherished wish is being fulfilled." After reading this touching account, the thought crossed my mind, "But what use are buildings if there are not sufficient members to occupy them?"

### Permission granted for missionary work

Such was the dilemma uppermost on my mind as my plane landed in Berlin that October afternoon. We went forward with the vital assignment to visit with the leaders of the German Democratic Republic. Our ultimate goal was to seek permission for the doorway of missionary work to open. Elder Russell M. Nelson, Elder Hans B. Ringger, and I, along with our local German Democratic Republic church leaders, headed by President Henry Burkhardt, President Frank Apel, and President Manfred Schutze, initially met with State Secretary for Religious Af-

fairs Kurt Löffler as he hosted a lovely luncheon in our honor. He addressed our group by saying, "We want to be helpful to you. We've observed you and your people for twenty years. We know you are what you profess to be: honest men and women."

Government leaders and their wives attended the dedication of a stake center at Dresden and a chapel at Zwickau. As the Saints sang "God be with you till we meet again" — "Auf Wiedersehen, Auf Wiedersehen" — we remembered Him, the Prince of Peace, who died on the cross at Calvary. I contemplated our Lord and Savior, when He walked the path of pain, the trail of tears, even the road of righteousness. His penetrating declaration came to mind: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Then it was back to Berlin for the crucial meetings with the head of the nation, even Chairman Erich Honecker.

That special morning the sunlight bathed the city of Berlin. It had been raining all night, but now beauty prevailed. We were driven to the chambers of the chief representatives of the government.

Beyond the exquisite entry to the building, we were greeted by Chairman Honecker. We presented to him the statuette *First Step*, depicting a mother helping her child take its first step toward its father. He was highly pleased with the gift. He then escorted us into his private council room. There, around a large round table, we were seated. Others at the table included Chairman Honecker and his deputies of government.

Chairman Honecker began, "We know members of your Church believe in work; you've proven that. We know you believe in the family; you've demonstrated that. We know you are good citizens in whatever country you claim as home; we have observed that. The floor is yours. Make your desires known."

I began, "Chairman Honecker, at the dedication and open house for the temple in Freiberg, 89,890 of your countrymen stood in line, at times up to four hours,



frequently in the rain, that they might see a house of God. In the city of Leipzig, at the dedication of the stake center, 12,000 people attended the open house. In the city of Dresden there were 29,000 visitors; in the city of Zwickau, 5,300. And every week of the year 1,500 to 1,800 people visit the temple grounds in the city of Freiberg. They want to know what we believe. We would like to tell them that we believe in honoring and obeying and sustaining the law of the land. We would like to explain our desire to achieve strong family units. These are but two of our beliefs. We cannot answer questions, and we cannot convey our feelings, because we have no missionary representatives here as we do in other countries. The young men and young women whom we would like to have come to your country as missionary representatives would love your nation and your people. More particularly, they would leave an influence with your people which would be ennobling. Then we would like to see young men and young women from your nation who are members of our Church serve as missionary representatives in many nations, such as in America, in Canada, and in a host of others. They will return better prepared to assume positions of responsibility in your land."

Chairman Honecker then spoke for perhaps thirty minutes, describing his objectives and viewpoints and detailing the progress made by his nation. At length, he smiled and addressed me and the group, saying, "We know you. We trust you. We have had experience with you. Your missionary request is approved."

My spirit literally soared out of the room. The meeting was concluded. As we left the beautiful government chambers, Elder Russell Nelson turned to me and said, "Notice how the sunshine is penetrating this hall. It's almost as though our Heavenly Father is saying, 'I am pleased.'"

The black darkness of night had ended. The bright light of day had dawned. The gospel of Jesus Christ would now be carried to the millions of people in that nation. Their questions

concerning the Church will be answered, and the Kingdom of God will go forth.

### Thanks be to God

As I reflect on these events, my thoughts turn to the Master's words, "In nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things" (D&C 59:21). I confess the hand of God in the miraculous events pertaining to the Church in the German Democratic Republic.

The faith and devotion of our members in that nation have not gone unnoticed by God. The excellent service of other General Authorities, Regional Representatives, and mission presidents has been of inestimable help. The understanding cooperation of government leaders is most appreciated. Assignments have been made to the first ten missionaries from the German Democratic Republic to serve abroad; and just three days ago, on Thursday, March 30, the first full-time missionary representatives in exactly fifty years entered the German Democratic Republic. Their mission president was there to greet them. The long period of preparation is past. The future of the Church unfolds. Thanks be to God.

### God's purposes will not fail

From the heavens we hear anew the Lord's declaration:

"Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior.

"Great is his wisdom, marvelous are his ways, and the extent of his doings none can find out.

"His purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand. . . .

"For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

"Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory" (D&C 76:1-3, 5-6).

May this be our universal blessing,  
I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Arise, Shine, Thy  
Light Is Come" without announcement.

### President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us, followed by the choir singing "Arise, Shine, Thy Light Is Come."

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

## Elder Boyd K. Packer

President Monson has reminded us that this is a worldwide church. I once received a clipping from a newspaper in India reporting something I had said to young people at this pulpit. Among those who now listen, or who may later read what we say, are young men and women, in many lands, struggling through those wonderful, worrisome teenage years. I meet teenagers all over the world, in perhaps seventy countries by now. I have stayed in the homes where you live—from tiny houses propped up on poles in the jungle to luxury city apartments.

I am about fifty years farther down the road of life than you are, but my memory is pretty good and I haven't forgotten entirely how it felt to be where you are. And my children and grandchildren renew my memory of how it feels to be a teenager.

Some years ago we stopped at a small restaurant. The young woman who served our meal was courteous but very sober. When she handed me the check, I said, "Can you tell us which road we take to get out of town?" Suddenly she burst into tears and said, "Mister, I don't even know how I got into this town."

I have wished more than once that we could have gone to a table in the corner and talked. Perhaps we could have helped her.

### Teenage wishes

Teenagers, even young men, sometimes feel like bursting into tears and say-

ing, "Mister, I don't even know how I got here." You wonder *who* you are and *why* you are and how you got to *where* you are.

I know that you sometimes feel that life isn't fair; why can't you have things that others have. You even wonder why you can't be somebody else and exchange your body with someone who appears to be more beautiful or handsome or talented or brighter or stronger or thinner; or change personalities with someone who is not so shy or blundering or frightened as you are.

Sometimes you wonder why you can't trade your parents for some better ones. No need to apologize; they sometimes wish they could trade you for someone easier to live with.

But parents and grandparents make allowances for those feelings. After all, we are just teenagers who have evened out a few of our frustrations so that they don't show as much as they did when we were your age. And someday, soon enough, *you* are going to be *us*!

### A different world

I wish we could promise you that the world will be safer and easier for you than for us. But we cannot make that promise, for just the opposite is true.

There are temptations beckoning to you that were not there when we were teenagers. AIDS had not been invented when we were young, and drugs were something a doctor prescribed. We knew

about opium from reading mysteries, but steroids, pills, and crack and all the rest belonged to future imaginations.

Modesty was not mocked then. Morality and courtesy were fostered in books and films as much as their opposites are today. Perversion was not talked about, much less endorsed as a life-style. What was shunned then as pornographic, you see now on prime-time television.

Your challenge is *much* greater than was ours. Few of us would trade places with you. Frankly, we are quite relieved that we are not back where you are. Few of us would be equal to it.

But, oh, what a wonderful time to be young! You have knowledge of many more things than we needed to have. It is my conviction that your generation is better and stronger than was ours—better in many ways! I have faith that you young men and young women can meet the world on its own terms and conquer it!

### The black knight

Alfred, Lord Tennyson told of Gareth, a prince and a knight of King Arthur's round table, and of his quest. The fair Lady Lyonors had been stolen away by the horrible black knight, who held her in his castle. Many young knights tried to rescue her but failed. They returned defeated and broken, with tales of the awesome power of the black knight; they begged Gareth not to go.

But Gareth went to the castle with the drawbridge, the tower, and the window where "Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept" ("Gareth and Lynette," *Idylls of the King*, line 1360). Then, "high on a night-black horse, in night-black arms, with white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death," a laughing skull engraved upon his helmet, "in the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—advanced the monster," more awesome, more terrible even than Gareth had been told (lines 1346–47, 49–50).

The black knight lowered his lance and thundered forward. Gareth, who had been defeated in more than one tournament, sensed his terrible fate. Every logic and emotion shouted, "Flee for your life!"

But he could not turn away. Not, that is, and keep his honor. Gareth lowered his lance and met the charge.

And then, to his surprise, Gareth unseated the black knight and tore his helmet away. There in that black armor with the bones engraven on it sat a little boy who began to cry and beg for mercy.

Young women, young men, no matter how many tournaments you lose along the way, no matter how monstrous your challenges may be, if you will learn a few simple lessons, it can be with you as it was with Gareth on that bridge before the castle of the black knight.

### Of royal birth

Gareth was only a prince. You are more than that. You are a child of God. He is the father of your spirit. Spiritually you are of noble birth, the offspring of the King of Heaven. Fix that truth in your mind and hold to it. However many generations in your mortal ancestry, no matter what race or people you represent, the pedigree of your spirit can be written on a single line. You are a child of God!

You are a dual being, a spirit clothed in a mortal body. Your body is the instrument of your mind and the foundation of your character. Take nothing into your body which may harm it or disturb the functions of your mind and spirit. Anything that is addictive is dangerous.

Within your body is the power to begot life, to share in creation. The only legitimate expression of that power is within the covenant of marriage. The worthy use of it is the very key to your happiness. Do not use that power prematurely, not with anyone. The misuse of it cannot be made right by making it popular.

Your spirit operates through your mind, but cultivating your intellect is not enough. Reason alone will neither protect nor redeem you. Reason nourished by faith can do both.

### The dark side

A warning: there is a dark side to spiritual things. In a moment of curiosity

or reckless bravado some teenagers have been tempted to toy with Satan worship. Don't you ever do that! Don't associate with those who do! You have no idea of the danger! Leave it alone! And there are other foolish games and activities that are on that dark side. Leave them alone!

There is a courage far greater than Gareth needed to face the black knight. It is the courage to run away from unworthy things when you will be mocked for doing so. That courage is laced with wisdom. We had to gain it from experience; you need it now.

You have an alarm system built into both body and spirit. In your body it is pain; in your spirit it is guilt—or spiritual pain. While neither pain nor guilt is pleasant, and an excess of either can be destructive, both are a protection, for they sound the alarm “Don't do that again!”

Be grateful for both. If the nerve endings in your hands were altered so that you couldn't feel pain, you might put them in fire or machinery and destroy them. In your teenage heart of hearts, you know right from wrong (see 2 Nephi 2:5). Learn to pay attention to that spiritual voice of warning within you. Even then, you will not get by without some mistakes.

## Forgiveness

Those who make one serious mistake tend to add another by assuming that it is then too late for them. It is never too late! Never!

While your temptations are greater than were ours, that will be considered in the judgments of the Lord. He said that “his mercies [are suited] according to the conditions of . . . men” (D&C 46:15). That is only just.

A great contribution to Christian doctrine is the explanation in the Book of Mormon of how *justice* and *mercy* and *repentance* and *forgiveness* work together to erase transgressions (see Alma 42).

The discouraging idea that a mistake (or even a series of them) makes it everlastingly too late, does not come from the Lord. He has said that *if* we will repent, not only will He forgive us our transgres-

sions, but He will forget them and remember our sins no more (see Isaiah 43:25; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17; Alma 36:19; D&C 58:42). Repentance is like soap; it can wash sin away. Ground-in dirt may take the strong detergent of discipline to get the stains out, but out they will come.

## The end of the world

Teenagers also sometimes think, “What's the use? The world will soon be blown all apart and come to an end.” That feeling comes from fear, not from faith. No one knows the hour or the day (see D&C 49:7), but the end cannot come until all of the purposes of the Lord are fulfilled. Everything that I have learned from the revelations and from life convinces me that there is time and to spare for you to carefully prepare for a long life.

One day you will cope with teenage children of your own. That will serve you right. Later, you will spoil your grandchildren, and they in turn spoil theirs. If an earlier end should happen to come to one, that is more reason to do things right.

However limited your body may be, it is a precious gift.

One of you may be well-born and well-formed while another is not. In either case, there is a testing. That is what mortality is all about. The poorly born may lack self-esteem, or the well-born infected with pride. Pride is the most deadly spiritual virus. In the eternal scheme of things, who is to say which is the most favored?

Listen carefully from the Book of Mormon: “If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

There may be more justice in who we are and what we have or do not have than we ever suppose.

You are a *child* of God!

What a wonderful time to be young. You will see events in your lifetime that will test your courage and extend your faith. If you will face the sunlight of truth, the shadows of discouragement and sin and error will fall behind you. You must never give up! It is never too late! There is no knight in black armor with such power as you may have if you live righteously.

He calls to you: "Wherefore, lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day, having done all, that ye may be able to stand.

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you;

"Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you, and be agreed as touching all things whatsoever ye ask of me, and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also" (D&C 27:15-18).

God bless you young women and young men who struggle through the worrisome teenage years. Some of you may not yet have found yourselves, but you are *not* lost, for Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. The gospel has been revealed and restored. Of Him I bear witness as I pray His blessings upon you, our youth, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

---

The choir sang "Jesus, Savior" with-out announcement.

---

### President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has addressed us, followed by the choir singing "Jesus, Savior."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints," following which we shall hear from Elder J. Richard Clarke, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

---

The choir and congregation sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

---

## Elder J. Richard Clarke

### Importance of family history work

My brothers and sisters, since last October it has been my blessing to be associated with the Family History Department of the Church. It enables each of us to experience the joy of the covenants and the ordinances of the temple as we make them available to our loved ones.

Famous *Roots* author, Alex Haley, once said: "In all of us there is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in life,

there is still . . . an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness."

Through family history we discover the most beautiful tree in the forest of creation—our family tree. Its numerous roots reach back through history, and its branches extend throughout eternity. Family history is the expansive expression of eternal love. It is born of selflessness. It provides opportunity to secure the family unit forever.

### Families of heaven

Moroni told young Joseph Smith that Elijah the prophet would come and reveal

anew the purposes, powers, and blessings of the holy priesthood which had been lost to the world. Through the keys he would restore, promises made earlier to the fathers would be planted in the hearts of their latter-day children. Our hearts would then turn to our fathers, and, through this impelling promise, the sacred relationships of mortality could be extended forever. Families of the earth could become families of heaven.

Dr. Krister Stendahl, bishop of the Lutheran Church in Stockholm, expressed this profound sentiment about our temple in Sweden: "Isn't it wonderful!" he said. "Only the Mormons are extending the blessings of the atonement of Jesus Christ to those beyond the grave." He is right. The blessings of the Atonement do extend beyond the grave. Jesus suffered and died to preserve and unify our Father's family.

### **The kindred family**

In earliest biblical culture, the family was more than a parent-and-child unit. It included all who were related by blood and marriage. This kindred family, as I prefer to call it, was strongly linked by natural affection and the patriarchal priesthood. The elderly were venerated for their experience and wisdom. There were strength and safety in numbers, and, through love and support, members established solidarity and continuity.

Many social and economic conditions in today's world militate against such a kindred family. Throughout the ages, evil forces have attacked the family. Why do you suppose Satan is so obsessed with its dissolution? Because it stands for everything he wants and cannot have. He cannot be a husband, a father, or a grandfather. He cannot have posterity now or ever. Satan cannot even keep those he has led away from God. He has no eternal kingdom or inheritance.

### **Society's most important institution**

Nevertheless, the family is society's strongest and most important institution. Where it has survived, it has done so as

a matter of highest priority. Individual interests have been subordinated to the interests of the group. Sacrifice has exceeded selfishness. Loyalty, respect for the family name, pride in one another's achievements, and shared quality time have been pre-eminent.

I had the good fortune of marrying into such a family. I have marveled as relatives have traveled great distances to support a family activity, a missionary farewell, or a wedding. An elderly aunt still invites cousins of four generations, who are attending Brigham Young University, into her home for family home evenings. Through this association, the cousins strengthen each other in keeping the covenants of the gospel.

If the kindred family system were working as it could, our hearts would encompass each family member in time of need. Shared resources would make the family self-reliant. Children would consider it a blessing, not a burden, to care for aged parents.

I know of a widowed father who was reluctant to live with his daughter who resided in another state. She thanked him for the privilege of taking him into her home, insisting that she now would be able to demonstrate her love for all she had received from her parents. She felt selfish in finally having him to herself. Upon his death, she told me how blessed she was to have had those last precious years with her father.

### **The priesthood solidifies families**

The priesthood is the vital power which solidifies the kindred family. One of the most sacred privileges of fatherhood is the blessing of one's children.

Many years ago in this Tabernacle, I heard Elder Sterling Sill recognize the men who had performed the essential priesthood ordinances listed on his membership record. I suddenly realized that my father's name did not appear on my record. He had not been active in the Church while I was growing up but had since become a faithful high priest.

Returning home from conference, I brooded about this, feeling deprived. I

telephoned my father and said, "Dad, I'd like to ask you a favor. You can do something for me that no other living person can do. I would like a father's blessing." He hesitated and said, "Well, we'll see, the next time you come to Rexburg."

I persisted. To my knowledge, he had never given a father's blessing before, and he was nervous. At the age of eighty-four, he placed his quivering hands upon my head. And this son will never forget the supreme joy of hearing a proud father pour out his heart in a blessing—a blessing which will be held sacred and cherished not because of its eloquence but because it came from my father. I hope, brethren, that you will not deny your children this choice experience.

### Single-parent families

Now, I realize there are numerous single-parent families in the Church who do not have a priesthood bearer to preside in the home and bless them. They are reluctant to impose on others and are frequently offended by insensitive remarks regarding their family status. This is also true of single adults who have yet to marry. They often feel cut off from the mainstream of Mormon family life. They especially need to be part of a gospel kindred family, where blessings can be obtained from worthy priesthood bearers and role models can be found in quorum brotherhood and Relief Society sisterhood. Families in the ward can reach out and share loving concern. Within the Lord's design, no one should be ignored. We are all members of the body of Christ.

### Joys of family history work

As we learn to be loving, caring families in mortality, our hearts will naturally turn to members of our kindred family in the spirit world. As they continue to live beyond the veil, they wait—they wait for us, their family, to share the blessings of the ordinances of the priesthood. They yearn to belong to the eternal family circle. They are anxious for us to

make this possible. Are we not compelled to do so?

I was impressed by the testimony of a single adult in Washington, D.C., who, as a recent convert, found herself suddenly immersed in the pursuit of her family history. After her first sacred experience of participating in the temple ordinance work for several of her kindred family, she expressed her feelings with tears of joy. "Now," she exclaimed, "I am no longer the only member of the Church in my family!"

Our family research and temple ordinances make it possible for us to be forever families. The process of compiling family history records need not be expensive or complicated. We may not be able to do everything; but we can do something.

With her permission, I would like to share part of a sweet letter I received from Sister Linda Seamon of the Flagstaff Arizona Stake.

"We are a young family. My husband and I are 33. We have three small children. This is a busy 'family time' for us in our lives. For months, Diana, our ward genealogy person, would call us on a regular basis to ask if there was anything she could do to help us get started on our family history.

"We of course thanked her for the call, but firmly replied that 'Aunt Leona, Cousin Nellie, and Aunt Bertha have done all there is to do on our families.' Then, intrigued by an article in the *Ensign* about the new 8½-by-11 forms for family history, I mentioned this to Diana and a week later she was at my door with the forms! I took a look and thought how neat it would be to fill in the forms with our own names in the blanks. This simple experience of a loving, persistent family history representative was what got us started.

"We both come from Mormon families several generations back. We thought the ordinance work for our ancestors had been completed. We were wrong! In the short months we have been collecting copies of family group records, we have had so many experiences that confirmed

to us the Lord's hand in this work: 44 baptisms, 45 endowments, 29 children sealed to parents, 16 marriage sealings. All of these from records that were supposedly 'all done.'

"Words cannot express the joy we have felt in the temple performing ordinances for our ancestors. Family relationships, some estranged since childhood, have been healed. Our extended families have also become involved. We have sent names to five different temples so that we could be united in helping to complete the temple work.

"We believe that it takes just one temple experience for one's ancestor to convince a person of the importance of this work. It is possible to become involved in this exciting work at any age. We're committed to it!"

### In partnership with God

The Prophet Joseph Smith gave us this sober warning: "The earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link . . . between the fathers and the children. . . . For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect" (D&C 128:18).

In the councils of heaven before the world began, we made a solemn agreement with the Lord to assist in bringing to pass the eternal life of man. Elder John A. Widtsoe reminds us that the least of us, the humblest, is in partnership with the Almighty in achieving the purpose of the eternal plan of salvation. It is man's duty, his pleasure and joy, his labor and ultimately his glory. By that doctrine, with the Lord at the head, we become saviors on Mount Zion.

I bear witness that this work is true. I testify that we may anticipate a glorious reunion with our kindred family through the covenant blessings of the priesthood. I pray that we will heed the prophets and inherit the supreme joy which comes from performing this marvelous work of salvation, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder J. Richard Clarke, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

## Elder Neal A. Maxwell

### Irony: the crust on the bread of adversity

What I now read is a most wintry verse indeed: "Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith" (Mosiah 23:21).

This very sobering declaration of divine purpose ought to keep us on spiritual alert as to life's adversities.

Irony is the hard crust on the bread of adversity. Irony can try both our faith and our patience. Irony can be a particularly bitter form of such chastening because it involves disturbing incongruity. It involves outcomes in violation of our

expectations. We see the best laid plans laid waste.

An individual is visibly and patiently prepared for an important role amid widespread expectation of his impending promotion or election. What follows, however, lasts only a very narrow moment in time. A political victory seems so near, recedes, and finally vanishes altogether.

Without meekness, such ironic circumstances are very difficult to manage.

In a marriage, a careless declaration hardens into a position, which position then becomes more important than communication or reconciliation. An intellectual stand is proudly and stubbornly



defended even in the face of tutoring truth or correcting counsel. Yet occasionally, as we all know, backing off is really going forward. Sometimes it takes irony to induce that painful but progressive posture.

### The challenges of irony

With its inverting of our anticipated consequences, irony becomes the frequent cause of an individual's being offended. The larger and the more untamed one's ego, the greater the likelihood of his being offended, especially when tasting his portion of vinegar and gall.

Words then issue, such as, Why me? Why this? Why now? Of course, these words may give way to subsequent spiritual composure. Sometimes, however, such words precede bitter insolubility, and then it is a surprisingly short distance between disappointment and bitterness.

Amid life's varied ironies, you and I may begin to wonder, Did not God notice this torturous turn of events? And if He noticed, why did He permit it? Am I not valued?

Our planning itself often assumes that our destiny is largely in our own hands. Then come intruding events, first elbowing aside, then evicting what was anticipated and even earned. Hence, we can be offended by events as well as by people.

Irony may involve not only unexpected suffering but also undeserved suffering. We feel we deserved better, and yet we fared worse. We had other plans, even commendable plans. Did they not count? A physician, laboriously trained to help the sick, now, because of his own illness, cannot do so. For a period, a diligent prophet of the Lord was an "idle witness" (Mormon 3:16). Frustrating conditions keep more than a few of us from making our appointed rounds.

Customized challenges are thus added to that affliction and temptation which Paul described as "common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

### Jesus' example of coping with irony

In coping with irony, as in all things, we have an Exemplary Teacher in Jesus. Dramatic irony assaulted Jesus' divinity almost constantly.

For Jesus, in fact, irony began at His birth. Truly, He suffered the will of the Father "in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11:11). This whole earth became Jesus' footstool (see Acts 7:49), but at Bethlehem there was "no room . . . in the inn" (Luke 2:7) and "no crib for his bed" ("Away in a Manger," *Hymns*, no. 206).

At the end, meek and lowly Jesus partook of the most bitter cup without becoming the least bitter (see 3 Nephi 11:11; D&C 19:18-19). The Most Innocent suffered the most. Yet the King of Kings did not break, even when some of His subjects did unto Him "as they listed" (D&C 49:6). Christ's capacity to endure such irony was truly remarkable.

You and I are so much more brittle. For instance, we forget that, by their very nature, tests are unfair.

In heaven, Christ's lofty name was determined to be the only name on earth offering salvation to all mankind (see Acts 4:12; 2 Nephi 25:20; see also Abraham 3:27). Yet the Mortal Messiah willingly lived so modestly, even, wrote Paul, as a person "of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7).

What a contrast to our maneuverings over relative recognition and comparative status. How different, too, from the ways in which some among us mistakenly see the size and response of their audiences as the sole verification of their worth. Yet those fickle galleries we sometimes play to have a way of being constantly emptied. They will surely be empty at the Judgment Day, when everyone will be somewhere else, on their knees.

As the Creator, Christ constructed the universe, yet in little Galilee He was known merely as "the carpenter's son" (Matthew 13:55). In fact, the Lord of the universe was without honor even in His own Nazarene countryside. Though astonished at His teachings, his neighbors "were offended at him" (Mark 6:3). Even meek Jesus "marvelled because of their unbelief" (6:6).

As Jehovah, Jesus issued the original commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy, but during His mortal Messiahship, He was accused of violating the Sabbath, because on that day He gave healing rest to the afflicted (see John 5:8-16).

Can we absorb the irony of being hurt while trying to help? Having done good, when we are misrepresented, can we watch the feathers of false witness scatter on the winds?

Christ, long, long ago, as Creator, provided habitable conditions for us on this earth, generously providing all the essential atmospheric conditions for life, including essential water (see Moses 1:33; D&C 76:24). When he was aflame with thirst on the cross, "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink" (Matthew 27:34; see also Psalm 69:21). Even so, there was no railing but a forgiving Christ (see Luke 23:34).

Christ was keenly aware of the constant irony: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). He asked a treacherous Judas, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48). And then there was the soulful lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). Yet the repeated ritual of rejection was happening to Jesus all over again.

We all know what it is like not to be listened to, but how about disdain or even contempt? Furthermore, there is a difference between noticing rejection, as Jesus did, and railing against rejection, as He did not.

As the Creator, Christ fashioned "worlds without number" (Moses 1:33), yet with His fingers He fashioned a little clay from spittle, restoring sight to one blind man (see John 9:6). The Greatest meekly ministered "unto one of the least of these" (Matthew 25:40).

Do you and I understand that the significance of our service does not depend upon its scale?

Within hours Christ would rescue all mankind, yet he heard the manipulated

crowd cry, "Barabbas," thereby rescuing a life-taking murderer instead of life-giving Jesus (see Mark 15:7-15).

Can we remain true amid false justice? Will we do our duty against the roar of the crowd?

### **Instructive irony**

As the Master Teacher, Christ tailored His tutoring, depending upon the spiritual readiness of His pupils. We see instructive irony even in some of these episodes.

To the healed leper returning with gratitude, Jesus' searching but simple query was, "Where are the [other] nine?" (Luke 17:17). To a more knowledgeable mother of Apostles, desiring that her two sons sit on Jesus' right and left hands, Jesus reprovably but lovingly said: "Ye know not what you ask. . . . [This] is not mine to give" (Matthew 20:22-23). To a grieving but rapidly maturing Peter, still burning with the memory of a rooster's crowing, thrice came the directive, "Feed my sheep," but also a signifying of "by what death" the great Apostle would later be martyred (John 18:25-27; 21:15-19). How much more demanding of Peter than of the leper!

### **Irony can strip corrosive pride**

If a sudden, stabbing light exposes the gap between what we are and what we think we are, can we, like Peter, let that light be a healing laser? Do we have the patience to endure when one of our comparative strengths is called into question? A painful crisis may actually be the means of stripping corrosive pride off of that virtue.

To the humbly devout woman of Samaria who expected the Messiah, Jesus quietly disclosed, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:26). Yet an anxious Pilate "saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer" (John 19:9).

Can we remain silent when silence is eloquence — but may be used against us? Or will we murmur, just to let God know we notice the ironies?

## The grand and glad irony

Yet, even with all the ironies, sad ironies, there is the grand and glad irony of Christ's great mission. He Himself noted that precisely because He was "lifted up upon the cross," He was able to "draw all men unto [him]," and being "lifted up by men," even so should "men be lifted up by the Father" (3 Nephi 27:14).

## Be more loving

But how can we fortify ourselves against the irony in our lives and cope better when it comes?

By being more like Jesus, such as by loving more. "And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, [Why?] because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men" (1 Nephi 19:9).

## Exercise self-denial

There are other significant keys for coping. "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Wise self-denial shrinks our sense of entitlement.

## Live in thanksgiving

Another cardinal key is to "live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which [God] doth bestow upon you" (Alma 34:38).

Life's comparatively few ironies are much more than offset by heaven's many mercies. We cannot count all our blessings every day, but we can carry over the reassuring bottom line from the last counting.

## Do not heed temptations

Another vital way of coping was exemplified by Jesus. Though He suffered

all manner of temptations (see Alma 7:11), yet He "gave no heed unto them" (D&C 20:22). Unlike some of us, He did not fantasize, reconsider, or replay temptations. How is it that you and I do not see that while initially we are stronger and the temptations weaker, dalliance turns things upside down?

## Manage irony with meekness

Jesus' marvelous meekness prevented any "root of bitterness" from "springing up" in Him (Hebrews 12:15). Ponder the Savior's precious words about the Atonement *after* He passed through it. There is no mention of the vinegar, no mention of the scourging, no mention of having been struck, no mention of having been spat upon. He does declare that He "suffer[ed] both body and spirit" in an exquisiteness which we simply cannot comprehend (D&C 19:18; see also 19:15).

## Do the will of the Father

We come now to the last and most terrible irony of Jesus: His feeling forsaken at the apogee of His agony on Calvary. The apparent withdrawal of the Father's spirit then evoked the greatest soul cry in human history (see James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1916], p. 613). This deprivation had never happened to Christ before—never. Yet, thereby, Jesus became a fully comprehending Christ and was enabled to be a fully succoring Savior (see Alma 7:11–12). Moreover, even in that darkest hour, while feeling forsaken, Jesus submitted Himself to the Father.

No wonder the Savior tells us that the combined anguish in Gethsemane and on Calvary was so awful that He would have shrunk. Nevertheless, He finished His preparations (see D&C 19:18–19; 3 Nephi 11:11). The word *nevertheless* reflects deep, divine determination.

Furthermore, even after treading the winepress alone (see D&C 76:107), which ended in His stunning, personal triumph and in the greatest victory ever—

majestic Jesus meekly declared, "Glory be to the Father"! (D&C 19:19). This should not surprise us. In the premortal world, Jesus meekly volunteered to be our Savior, saying, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). Jesus was true to His word.

### Glory be to the Father

Now, in closing, I humbly declare, "Glory be to the Father"—first, for rearing such an Incomparable Son. Second, "Glory be to the Father" for allowing His special Son to suffer and to be sacrificed for all of us. On Judgment Day, brothers and sisters, will any of us want to rush forward to tell our Father how we, as parents, suffered when we watched our children suffer?

Glory be to the Father, in the name of Him who can succor us amid all

our ironies and adversities (see Alma 7:11–12), even Jesus Christ, amen.

---

The choir sang "A Marvelous Work" without announcement.

---

### President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us. The choir then sang "A Marvelous Work."

At the conclusion of my remarks, the choir will sing "Go Forth with Faith," and the benediction will be offered by Elder Hans B. Ringger, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

### Expression of optimism

We've had a wonderful morning where the Spirit of the Lord has been felt. I pray for a continuation of that Spirit.

A distinguished Protestant minister called on us the other day. In the course of our conversation he asked, "How do you feel about things?"

I replied, "I feel very optimistic. Things are happening in the world that are salutary and good. There are wars, yes. There is conflict, yes. But there also is much of peace among the nations of the earth. Something of tremendous significance is happening in the USSR and the People's Republic of China. There is growing freedom of expression and activity. A new openness is developing. I feel the spirit of Christ is brooding over the nations of the earth.

"Of course there are problems, many and serious. We sorrow over the plague of drugs with its bitter harvest. We deplore the terrible scourge of pornography. We grieve over the wicked flood of immorality and abortion. We are concerned with the epidemic of infidelity, of divorce

and broken homes. We are disturbed over the plight of the homeless and over stark hunger in many parts of the earth.

"But the remarkable thing is that so many people care. More than at any time in the history of the world, I believe, there are men and women by the tens of thousands who are reaching out with their strength and their substance to help those in distress. Modern science and medicine are doing wonders to alleviate pain and prolong life. There is greater fulfillment in the lives of millions.

"Concerning our own work—that is, the work of this church—I feel even more optimistic. We are growing stronger. I hope our people are growing better. I think they are. There is increased activity, increased devotion, increased faithfulness."

I told him that two or three weeks earlier I was in an area where the percentage of members regularly attending their Sunday meetings was 70 to 75 percent. I think that is wonderful. In fact, I believe it is unique. These are wards of ordinary, faithful Latter-day Saints.

I concluded by saying, "I repeat, I feel optimistic—guardedly so, yes, because of the extent of evil in the world. But, on the basis of what I see, goodness is gaining, and the work of the Lord is growing in strength and power."

### Church growth since 1981

After he had left, I reflected on what I had said. I recalled an experience I had in January when I heard President Ronald Reagan give his farewell address to the people of this nation. He spoke of what had been achieved during the eight years of his presidency. As he spoke, I wondered what had happened in the Church during those eight years. I asked our record keepers for some statistics. You may be interested in a few highlights.

It so happens that during these same eight years I have served as a Counselor in the First Presidency and have had an opportunity to see the picture of the entire Church worldwide in its many activities and ramifications. Remarkable things have happened during this period. I do not speak in any sense of boasting. Nor do I claim any credit.

Yesterday, Brother Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, presented the 1988 statistical report of the Church. Let me draw on that for a moment, using some comparisons.

At the beginning of 1981, the membership of the Church stood at 4,600,000. At the close of 1988, the membership had reached 6,720,000, an increase of over two million from January 1, 1981, to January 1, 1989. The number of stakes increased during that period from 1,218 to 1,707, or approximately 500. The number of congregations increased from 12,591 to 16,558, or approximately 4,000 new wards and branches. The number of missions grew from 188 to 222. The number of political entities—nations or territories—in which we are working grew from 83 to 125. The number of temples more than doubled, from 19 to 41.

These are only statistics, but behind all of them are men and women, boys and girls. We are speaking of sons and daughters

of God into whose lives has come greater knowledge and into whose hearts has come increased faith in the things of eternity. There has likewise been greatly increased consecration and dedication.

At the close of 1988, there were 36,132 missionaries in the field or under call. There were likewise thousands of volunteers serving in the Family History program, working in various Church offices, and teaching in our seminary system. The value of their consecrated time would run into the tens of millions of dollars.

### Love is like the lodestar

The Church is moving forward because it is true. It is growing because there is a broadening love for that truth. It is growing because of a love for God, a love for the Savior, a love for neighbor, and a strengthening spirit of love in the homes of the people. It is this love which is the great constant in all of our work. It stems from that love which is divine:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

I wish to say a few words about that love, that constant, never-failing quality that has the power to lift us above the evil, the conflict, and the trouble of the world in which we live.

When I was a boy, we lived on a farm in the summer. It was in the country, where the nights were dark. There were no streetlights or anything of the kind. My brother and I slept out-of-doors. On clear nights—and most of those nights were clear and the air was clean—we would lie on our backs and look at the myriads of stars in the heavens. We could identify some of the constellations and other stars as they were illustrated in our encyclopedia. Each night we would trace the Big Dipper, the handle and the cup, to find the North Star.

We came to know of the constancy of that star. As the earth turned, the others appeared to move through the night. But the North Star held its position in line with the axis of the earth. And so it had

come to be known as the Polar Star, or the Polestar, or the Lodestar. Through centuries of time, mariners had used it to guide them in their journeys. They had reckoned their bearings by its constancy, thereby avoiding traveling in circles or in the wrong direction, as they moved across the wide, unmarked seas.

Because of those boyhood musings, the Polar Star came to mean something to me. I recognized it as a constant in the midst of change. It was something that could always be counted on, something that was dependable, an anchor in what otherwise appeared to be a moving and unstable firmament.

Love is like the Polar Star. In a changing world, it is a constant. It is of the very essence of the gospel. It is the security of the home. It is the safeguard of community life. It is a beacon of hope in a world of distress.

### God's great love for us

Back in 1984 we participated in the dedicatory services of the Sydney Australia Temple. There were many talks and much music and many prayers to open and close the various sessions. I confess I do not remember much of what was said or sung. But I have never forgotten the words spoken by a man who offered one of the opening prayers. He said, "Dear Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast loved us." These words, among the very many heard on those occasions, have fastened themselves upon my mind.

Great beyond comprehension is the love of God. He is our loving Eternal Father. Out of His love for us, He has given an eternal plan which, when followed, leads to exaltation in His kingdom. Out of His love for us, He sent His Firstborn into the world, who, out of His own divine love, gave Himself as a sacrifice for each of us. His was an incomparable gift of love to a world that largely spurned Him. He is our great exemplar. We should let love become the lodestar of our lives, with the absolute assurance that, because of the love of God our Eternal Father and His own beloved Son, our salvation from

the bonds of death is sure and our opportunity for eternal exaltation is certain. Let that divine love, shed on us, be reflected from our lives onto others of our Father's children.

### Love and help the poor

As we look across the broad spectrum of humanity at the masses who walk in hunger and poverty and in whose lives are the constant afflictions of disease and misery, let us be generous with our substance to assist. We did a significant thing back in 1985 when we held two special fast days. In a great outpouring of love, our people contributed on those two days more than 10½ million dollars to help in bridging the gap between life and death for uncounted starving and underprivileged people. The Church continues to have a program, a Hunger Fund, to which we may contribute with love-filled hearts to assist those not of our faith who are in misery in many parts of the world.

Out of a sense of love for the less fortunate among our own, let us observe the law of the fast, going without a little food — which we do not need — and contributing the value thereof and even more to help those who are in desperate circumstances.

### Serve through temple work

Let love become the lodestar of our lives. Surely we are a blessed people. We are blessed with the good things of earth, and we are blessed with the precious things of heaven. The holy priesthood is among us; its powers extend beyond the veil of death. In the sacred houses which we call temples, there is opportunity to do for others that which they cannot do for themselves. As surely as Christ offered Himself a vicarious sacrifice for *all* mankind, so we can engage in vicarious service in behalf of *some* of mankind, thus affording them the opportunity to move forward on the road of immortality and eternal life. Great is this work of love which goes on in these holy houses. Legion are the men and women who, with

total unselfishness, labor day and night in this work which speaks of divinity.

### Reach out to the distressed

Let love be the Polar Star of our lives in reaching out to those who need our strength. There are many among us who lie alone in pain. Medicine helps, but kind words can bring to pass miracles. Many there are who walk in frightening circumstances, fearful and unable to cope. There are good bishops and Relief Society officers who are available to help, but these cannot do it all. Each of us can and must be anxiously engaged. It was said of the Savior, "[He] went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

Said Isaiah: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you" (Isaiah 35:3-4).

Declared Micah, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

And the divine voice of revelation speaks, "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

Such are the injunctions — these and many more — to reach out to those in distress with a measure of that love which was epitomized in the life and works of the Savior.

### Love and forgive enemies

There are even those among us whose lives are torn with hate. They lash out at one thing and another, including the Church. They manufacture and spread vile falsehoods behind which there is not a shred of truth. There is nothing new about this, except that there have been those in each generation, including this generation, who appear to be possessed of a sickness that so manifests itself. In such circumstances, we draw comfort from the words of the Master: "Blessed

are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matthew 5:11).

We think also of the mandate of modern revelation: "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:10).

We think of a public figure who, when driven from office, said, "Those who hate you don't win unless you hate them — and then you destroy yourself."

It is not always easy to follow the Polar Star of love. It requires a discipline almost beyond the power of many to observe. I think it is the most difficult and also the most important of all commandments. But out of its observance comes a remarkable discipline and a refining influence that are wonderful to experience. It savors of the sweet, all-encompassing love of Christ.

### Strengthen family love

To those of you who live in troubled homes, may I suggest that you let love become the lodestar of your family life. There is too much of shouting, too much of recrimination, so many tears in the homes of some of our people. Love is the only remedy. It is the very basis of marriage. It can be nurtured and strengthened, or it can be starved and weakened. The power lies within ourselves. Bridle your tempers, husbands. Wives, hold your tongues. Revive the wondrous feeling that brought you to the marriage altar.

Love is the very essence of family life. Why is it that the children we love become so frequently the targets of our harsh words? Why is it that these children who love their fathers and mothers sometimes speak as if with daggers that cut to the quick? "There is beauty all around," *only* "when there's love at home" (*Hymns*, no. 294).

### Love never faileth

The word *love* is often used in place of the word *charity* in Paul's great declaration. I so read it:

"[Love] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. . . .

"And now abideth, faith, hope, [love], these three; but the greatest of these is [love]" (1 Corinthians 13:8, 13).

Speaking to us in this dispensation, the Lord has said, "And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify [us] for the work" (D&C 4:5).

Few of us see the Polar Star anymore. We live in urban centers, and the city lights affect our vision of the wondrous firmament above us. But, as it has been for centuries, the star is there, in its place, its constancy a guide and an an-

chor. So likewise is love — unyielding, unchanging, "the pure love of Christ," as Moroni declared, "and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him" (Moroni 7:47).

I leave with you my love and extend my blessing and pray that there may be peace in your hearts and in your homes, in the name of Him whose life was the supreme offering of love, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

---

The choir sang "Go Forth with Faith."

Elder Hans B. Ringger offered the benediction.

---

## SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 159th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 2, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began:

### President Thomas S. Monson

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 159th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Adney Y. Komatsu and Francis M. Gibbons are seated on the stand. We also

send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We had a wire which indicated that this morning's conference session was received clearly and with great excitement by overflowing audiences in Manchester, England; Frankfurt, Germany; and San Jose, Costa Rica.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold D. Ottley and accompanied by Robert Cundick, will begin this service by singing "Praise to the Man." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Douglas J. Martin of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

---

The choir sang "Praise to the Man."  
Elder Douglas J. Martin offered the invocation.

---

### President Monson

The choir will now sing "A Song of Peace." Following the singing, Elder



Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

---

The choir sang "A Song of Peace."

---

## Elder Russell M. Nelson

### The canker of contention

Some months ago my esteemed colleague Elder Carlos E. Asay and I stood atop Mount Nebo, where Moses once stood (see Deuteronomy 34:1-4). We saw what he saw. In the distance to our right was the Sea of Galilee. The river Jordan flowed from there to the Dead Sea on our left. Ahead was the promised land into which Joshua led the Israelite faithful so long ago.

Later we were permitted to do what Moses could not. We were escorted from the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan to its western border with Israel. From there, we and our associates walked over the Allenby Bridge. We felt the tension as armed soldiers nearby guarded both sides of the international boundary.

After safely enduring this experience, I thought of the irony of it all. Here in the land made holy by the Prince of Peace, contention has existed almost continuously from that day to this.

Prior to His ascension from the Holy Land, the Savior pronounced a unique blessing: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

His peace is not necessarily political; His peace is personal. But that spirit of inner peace is driven away by contention. Contention does not usually begin as strife between countries. More often, it starts with an individual, for we can contend within ourselves over simple matters of right and wrong. From there, contention can infect neighbors and nations like a spreading sore.

As we dread any disease that undermines the health of the body, so should we deplore contention, which is a corroding canker of the spirit. I appreciate the counsel of Abraham Lincoln, who said:

"Quarrel not at all. No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare

time for personal contention. . . . Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him" (Letter to J. M. Cutts, 26 Oct. 1863, in *Concise Lincoln Dictionary of Thoughts and Statements*, comp. and arr. Ralph B. Winn [New York: New York Philosophical Library, 1959], p. 107).

President Ezra Taft Benson in his keynote address yesterday described contention as "another face of pride."

My concern is that contention is becoming accepted as a way of life. From what we see and hear in the media, the classroom, and the workplace, all are now infected to some degree with contention. How easy it is, yet how wrong it is, to allow habits of contention to pervade matters of spiritual significance, because contention is forbidden by divine decree:

"The Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; that they should not lie; that they should not steal; that they should not take the name of the Lord their God in vain; that they should not envy; that they should not have malice; that they should not contend one with another" (2 Nephi 26:32).

### The creator of contention

To understand why the Lord has commanded us not to "contend one with another," we must know the true source of contention. A Book of Mormon prophet revealed this important knowledge even before the birth of Christ:

"Satan did stir them up to do iniquity continually; yea, he did go about spreading rumors and contentions upon all the face of the land, that he might harden the hearts of the people against that which was good and against that which should come" (Helaman 16:22).

When Christ did come to the Nephites, He confirmed that prophecy:

"He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me [saith the Lord], but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

"Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away" (3 Nephi 11:29-30).

### The origin of contention

Contention existed before the earth was formed. When God's plan for creation and mortal life on the earth was first announced, sons and daughters of God shouted for joy. The plan was dependent on man's agency, his subsequent fall from the presence of God, and the merciful provision of a Savior to redeem mankind. Scriptures reveal that Lucifer sought vigorously to *amend* the plan by destroying the agency of man. Satan's cunning motive was unmasked in his statement:

"Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1).

Satan's selfish efforts to alter the plan of God resulted in great contention in heaven. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained:

"Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he could save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 357).

This war in heaven was not a war of bloodshed. It was a war of conflicting ideas—the beginning of contention.

Scriptures repeatedly warn that the father of contention opposes the plan of our Heavenly Father. Satan's method relies on the infectious canker of contention. Satan's motive: to gain personal acclaim even over God Himself.

### Targets of the adversary

The work of the adversary may be likened to loading guns in opposition to the work of God. Salvos containing germs of contention are aimed and fired at strategic targets essential to that holy work. These vital targets include—in addition to the individual—the family, leaders of the Church, and divine doctrine.

### The family

The family has been under attack ever since Satan first taunted Adam and Eve (see Genesis 3; Moses 4). So today, each must guard against the hazard of contention in the family. It usually begins innocently. Years ago when our daughters were little girls who wanted to be big girls, the style of the day was to wear multiple petticoats. A little contention could have crept in as the girls soon learned that the one to get dressed first was the one best dressed.

In a large family of boys, those with the longest reach were the best fed. In order to avoid obvious contention, they adopted a rule that required them at mealtime to leave at least one foot on the floor.

The home is the great laboratory of learning and love. Here parents help children overcome these natural tendencies to be selfish. In rearing our own family, Sister Nelson and I have been very grateful for this counsel from the Book of Mormon:

"Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, . . .

"But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another" (Mosiah 4:14-15).

And I might add, please be patient while children learn those lessons.

Parents should be partners to cherish and protect one another, knowing that the aim of the adversary is to destroy the integrity of the family.

## Leaders of the Church

Leaders of the Church are targets for attack by those who stir contention. This is true even though not a single leader has called himself or herself to a position of responsibility. Each General Authority, for instance, chose another path to pursue as his life's occupation. But the reality is, as with Peter or Paul, each was surely "called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority" (Articles of Faith 1:5). With that call comes the commitment to emulate the patterns of the Prince of Peace.

That goal is shared by worthy servants of the Master, who would not speak ill of the Lord's anointed nor provoke contention over teachings declared by ancient or living prophets.

Certainly no faithful follower of God would promote any cause even remotely related to religion if rooted in controversy, because contention is not of the Lord.

Surely a stalwart would not lend his or her good name to periodicals, programs, or forums that feature offenders who do sow "discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19; see also 6:14).

Such agitators unfortunately fulfill long-foretold prophecy: they "take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed" (Psalm 2:2).

Yet, mercifully, the anointed pray for those who attack them, knowing the sad fate prophesied for their attackers (see D&C 121:16–22).

Throughout the world, Saints of the Lord follow Him and His anointed leaders. They have learned that the path of dissent leads to real dangers. The Book of Mormon carries this warning:

"Now these dissenters, having the same instruction and the same information . . . , having been instructed in the same knowledge of the Lord, nevertheless, it is strange to relate, not long after their dissensions they became more hardened and impenitent, and more wild, wicked and ferocious . . . ; giving way to indolence, and all manner of lascivi-

ousness; yea, entirely forgetting the Lord their God" (Alma 47:36).

How divisive is the force of dissension! Small acts can lead to such great consequences. Regardless of position or situation, no one can safely assume immunity to contention's terrible toll.

Thomas B. Marsh, once one of the Twelve, left the Church. His spiritual slide to apostasy started because his wife and another woman had quarreled over a little cream! After an absence from the Church of nearly nineteen years, he came back. To a congregation of Saints, he then said:

"If there are any among this people who should ever apostatize and do as I have done, prepare your backs for a good whipping, if you are such as the Lord loves. But if you will take my advice, you will stand by the authorities" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:206; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, pp. 109–12; or *Ensign*, May 1984, pp. 81–83).

Of course the authorities are human. But to them God has entrusted the keys to His divine work. And He holds us accountable for our responses to the teachings of His servants. These are the words of the Lord:

"If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

"But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest" (D&C 124:45–46).

## Divine doctrine

Divine doctrine of the Church is the prime target of attack by the spiritually contentious. Well do I remember a friend who would routinely sow seeds of contention in church classes. His assaults would invariably be preceded by this predictable comment: "Let me play the role of devil's advocate." Recently he passed away. One day he will stand before the Lord in judgment. Then, I wonder, will my friend's predictable comment again be repeated?

Such contentious spirits are not new. In an epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul gave this warning, "that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed" (1 Timothy 6:1).

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to [his] doctrine, . . . doting about questions and strifes of words, . . . supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (1 Timothy 6:3-5; see also Isaiah 29:21; 2 Nephi 27:32; D&C 19:30; 38:41; 60:14).

Dissecting doctrine in a controversial way in order to draw attention to oneself is not pleasing to the Lord. He declared:

"Bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me.

"And this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them" (D&C 10:62-63).

Contention fosters disunity. The Book of Mormon teaches the better way:

"Alma, having authority from God, . . . commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another" (Mosiah 18:18, 21; see also 23:15).

### Steps to supplant contention

What can we do to combat this canker of contention? What steps may each of us take to supplant the spirit of contention with a spirit of personal peace?

To begin, show compassionate concern for others. Control the tongue, the pen, and the word processor. Whenever tempted to dispute, remember this proverb: "He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding

holdeth his peace" (Proverbs 11:12; see also 17:28).

Bridle the passion to speak or write contentiously for personal gain or glory. The Apostle Paul thus counseled the Philippians, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Such high mutual regard would then let us respectfully disagree without being disagreeable.

But the ultimate step lies beyond beginning control of expression. Personal peace is reached when one, in humble submissiveness, truly loves God. Heed carefully this scripture:

"There was no contention in the land, *because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people*" (4 Nephi 1:15; italics added; see also 1:2).

Thus, love of God should be our aim. It is the first commandment—the foundation of faith. As we develop love of God and Christ, love of family and neighbor will naturally follow. Then will we eagerly emulate Jesus. He healed. He comforted. He taught, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9; see also 3 Nephi 12:9).

Through love of God, the pain caused by the fiery canker of contention will be extinguished from the soul. This healing begins with a personal vow: "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me" (Sy Miller and Jill Jackson, "Let There Be Peace on Earth" [Beverly Hills, Calif.: Jan-Lee Music, 1972]). This commitment will then spread to family and friends and will bring peace to neighborhoods and nations.

Shun contention. Seek godliness. Be enlightened by eternal truth. Be like-minded with the Lord in love and united with Him in faith. Then shall "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7), be yours, to bless you and your posterity through generations yet to come. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder F. Enzo Busche

### Temple service awakens the soul

I am overwhelmed with feelings of joy and deep gratitude to be able to participate in this gathering of the Saints of the latter days in this great conference. It is impossible to describe with words the feelings that Sister Busche and I share as we are now serving in the second year in one of the temples of the Lord. The dimensions of its sacredness and holiness continue to inspire us every day.

Since our first visit to the temple thirty years ago, we have always revered and cherished the temple as a sacred place—a place of learning and a place of service—but now, after having been permitted to concentrate our minds and hearts for two years solely upon the purposes and holiness of the house of the Lord, it seems as if our souls have come to a new awakening. Our first awakening came when the gospel of Jesus Christ was manifested to us through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, giving us an understanding of faith, repentance, and baptism. This time it is as if a veil has been removed from our spiritual minds and we see the same gospel, but in sharper focus, with clearer colors, and with added dimensions of understanding.

### The university for eternal life

This is not the time or the occasion for me to speak at any length or depth about the meaning and purpose of the temple, but I feel I should share some feelings with you that have grown during many quiet hours in the house of the Lord.

It is certainly true that after we members have received our own endowment,

we usually return to the house of the Lord to dedicate our time for the salvation of our ancestors. But, in the light of my experiences in being close to the house of the Lord, I have come to know that the Lord is urgently inviting *all* members of His church to prepare and to go to the temple, not only for their own ordinances for salvation and for their ancestors, but also for additional reasons. It has become my conviction that the temple is the only “university” for men to prepare spiritually for their graduation to eternal life. The temple is the place where the Lord wants us to make a sincere evaluation of our mortal lives. He wants us to know the consequences of the fact that this life is a probationary time, for it has been revealed to men of our day through the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. We read, for instance, in Alma 12:24:

“And we see that death comes upon mankind, . . . which is the temporal death; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God.”

### Wickedness never was happiness

Understanding this, it seems to be imperative to ask ourselves these questions: How are we really doing? Is there a way to find out or to know where we are and whether we are on the right track?

Again, I feel the answers to these questions are to be found in the Book of Mormon, in the forty-first chapter of Alma, verses 10 and 11:

“Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness.

" . . . All men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; . . . they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness."

We all are prone, once in a while, to be in a state contrary to the nature of happiness, and not necessarily because we have pursued wickedness or iniquity to a full extent. But so long as we are in this earthly probationary state, the adversary can influence us. We may have become a little careless. We may have neglected our relationships with those closest to us—those who are our first responsibility—our spouse, our children, or our parents. Perhaps we may have permitted small bad habits or attitudes to enter into our lives; or perhaps we have even lost to some degree an understanding of the importance of keeping a covenant with exactness. If so, we are in a dangerous state. We must become aware of it. We cannot afford to ignore the situation. We may observe that for some time we are not really happy, that we must constantly force ourselves to smile, or perhaps that we are in a state close to depression. One may not yet have formally broken a covenant, or may even still manage to hide behind a facade of happiness. Although we might deceive others, we cannot deceive ourselves, and we cannot deceive the Lord.

### **An essential awareness**

When the Spirit of the Lord is withdrawn even in part, we feel it, though we may know little or nothing about the gospel of Jesus Christ or the plan of salvation. When any child of God breaks any of the laws of God, which are the laws of righteousness, the Spirit of Christ, which, according to the scriptures, gives "light to every man" will be withdrawn to some degree (D&C 84:46; see also D&C 93:2; 121:37; John 1:9). Shadows of darkness will fall upon the soul, and, in this state, an *awareness* of what is happening to us is essential.

### **Study scriptures to gain awareness**

The gospel in its fulness is being preached throughout the world by the Lord's anointed servants, that everyone may come to an awareness of his state. In order to be close to the words of the Lord's anointed, it is necessary to read and study the scriptures with commitment and dedication. What we have seen or felt, or what we have learned from the lessons others have learned after much tribulation can make it possible for us to avoid going through the same suffering ourselves.

For instance, we of this day and age can today feel and learn from the teachings of the prophet Alma in the Book of Mormon, as though we were listening to him preach more than two thousand years ago:

"If our hearts have been hardened, yea, if we have hardened our hearts against the word, insomuch that it has not been found in us, then will our state be awful, for then we shall be condemned.

"For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.

"But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance" (Alma 12:13–15).

### **Become our own judges**

My dear brothers and sisters, the Lord does not want us to become aware of our state of nothingness and misery (see Mosiah 4:11; Alma 26:12; Helaman 12:7;

Moses 1:10) only at the Day of Judgment. Now and every day in our mortal lives, He wants to sharpen our awareness, that we may become our own judges, as He calls us to a continuous process of repentance.

After Alma had spoken about repentance and desires of righteousness until the end of life, he said, "They . . . are redeemed of the Lord; . . . for behold, they are their own judges" (Alma 41:7). The Apostle Paul also explained, as stated in 1 Corinthians 11:31, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

It seems that we can effectively go through the process of continuous repentance only if we literally learn to become our own judges. We ourselves and the Lord are the only ones who really know us. We do not even know ourselves unless we have learned to walk the lonely and most challenging road toward self-honesty, as constantly prompted by the Spirit.

This is the sacrifice we have to learn to offer. Nobody will ever be able to understand or even to accept principles of truth unless he or she, to some degree, has developed a painful awareness of the dimensions of self-honesty. Without the capability to recognize truth, we will not be really free; we will be slaves to habits or prejudices heavily covered with excuses. But learning to become aware of the depth of the dimensions of truth will make us free. We cannot remove a stumbling block unless we see it first. We cannot grow unless we know what is holding us back.

### **Understanding gained in the temple**

My dear brothers and sisters, I know of no better place where we can grow in

the understanding of the principles of honesty than in the house of the Lord. I know of no better place to learn to grow in the dimensions of becoming our own judge than in the house of the Lord. We have reason to rejoice because the understanding that this life is a time for men to prepare to meet God has come to us while we still have time to consider the consequences of this message. We are still alive, and our probationary state is not yet over. Temples have been erected as houses of the Lord. They are standing ready to serve as instruments to our own gradual awakening to the full dimensions of truth on our inevitable road to eternity.

I personally have been humbled deeply in these days of quietness in the temple as I have been granted a deeper understanding of the nothingness of man, the need for a process of continuous repentance, and the need for temple covenants, which are based upon the principles of the atonement of Christ.

I know that the Lord Jesus Christ lives. I know that this is His church. I know that He stands at the helm of this work. It is a great joy to see the continuously increasing numbers of members who are understanding the importance of the temple for their own spiritual education and, therefore, for their own spiritual preparation for eternal life.

I leave you this testimony as your brother and your servant, and I do this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Sister Joy F. Evans, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency.

## **Sister Joy F. Evans**

### **Ministering to the sick and needy**

We read in the book of Matthew that when the Son of Man shall come in his

glory, all the nations of the earth shall be gathered before him and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. Those on

his right hand shall be blessed and shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. (See Matthew 25:31-34.) And the King shall say unto them:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer . . . , Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer . . . , Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:35-40).

Almost every day we have the opportunity to feed the hungry, to visit the sick, to help bear one another's burdens, even as the Savior taught. Sometimes the service is given to our family, our children, our husbands or wives, our parents, our loved ones. Sometimes it is a neighbor or a friend in need, sometimes a stranger.

Having compassion on those who are hurting for whatever reason and then translating the response of the heart into the needed act is truly ministering as God would have us do.

### Relief Society service

At the time of the organization of the Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Smith told the sisters that they were now in a position to act according to those sympathies which God had placed in their bosoms (see *History of the Church*, 4:605).

Today, countless women in the Church reach out to others through visiting teaching and compassionate service, which are still the heart of Relief Society. They bless the lives of others and buoy up those who may be discouraged or homesick, frightened or disheartened. They remember the counsel given us by a

prophet that "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom" (Spencer W. Kimball, "Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, p. 5). The book of Proverbs admonishes us to "withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it" (3:27).

Perhaps a personal experience will help to illustrate this loving, watchful care that we are to extend to one another.

My husband and I have been blessed with ten wonderful children. Seven of them are living, which means, of course, that three of them are not. During the times that I was pregnant I had to stay in bed much of the time, and it was always a great worry that I carry those precious babies until they were big enough to survive. During many weeks, my visiting teachers came with lunch for me or dinner for my family. They tended our toddlers and sent library books for me to read.

When our twins were born, we were totally surprised by having two babies! How wonderful to have two little people with only one pregnancy! It was not to be for long, however—at least in this life. Our baby boy lived two days; our baby girl lived three. The sisters were there again, not only with food, but with a beautiful rose bush called "Duet" which flourished and grew. It was a sweet reminder of a tender time. The lovely blossoms helped us to remember our little ones, our friends, our gratitude for the gospel and for the Church.

### Reaching out in love

We must take seriously our responsibility to reach out in love to those among us who may be lonely or unhappy—who are struggling with problems or temptations. They will find friends somewhere; they will find comfort somewhere. What is our failure if they find it elsewhere because we were not there, were not welcoming?

"I needed you—I couldn't find you—I don't need you anymore." We



must not let this happen if there is any way for us to be there when we are needed.

### **Responding to chronic and terminal illness**

Response to the needs of the sick, and especially the terminally ill and their families, has been a part of the work of love assigned to the Relief Society since its very beginning. Times have changed greatly since those early days in Nauvoo when the sisters gave much of the only care given to the sick and dying, when they sewed the casket linings, made the burial clothes, cared tenderly for the bodies of the dead, and comforted the living. Life is not so hard now in our time and generation and has been lengthened for most of us and made infinitely more comfortable.

But chronic and terminal illness still exist—sometimes for the young, sometimes for the elderly—and death must still be faced. We still are to help “bear . . . one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2), “comfort those that stand in need of comfort,” and “mourn with those that mourn” (Mosiah 18:9).

Compassionate service can be a sweet, sustaining help to the patient and the family during such times. “I was sick, . . . and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:36).

Many times people do nothing in such a situation simply because they do not know what to do. They are afraid of intruding or of saying the wrong thing. Perhaps they do not know how to relate to a dying person or to the family. They may feel emotions of anger, sadness, or confusion. Nevertheless, even they can find many ways to help.

One woman tells the story of a tragedy she experienced when five of her close family members from another state were killed in a fiery automobile accident. She herself was struggling to absorb the news, trying to pack for her own little family to leave the following day for the funeral. A good friend and neighbor ar-

rived at her door with the announcement that he had come to clean their shoes. She had not even thought about shoes.

He knelt on their kitchen floor with a pan of soapy water, a sponge, shoe polish, and a brush and soon had everyday shoes and Sunday shoes gleaming and spotless. He quietly slipped away when he finished, leaving the shoes ready to pack; even the soles were washed.

The mother says, “Now, whenever I hear of an acquaintance who has lost a loved one, I no longer call with the vague offer, ‘If there’s anything I can do . . .’ Now I try to think of one specific task that suits that person’s need—such as washing the family car, taking the dog to the boarding kennel, or house-sitting during the funeral. And if the person says to me, ‘How did you know I needed that done?’ I reply, ‘It’s because a man once cleaned my shoes’” (Madge Harrah, “I’ve Come to Clean Your Shoes,” *Reader’s Digest*, Dec. 1983, pp. 21–24).

Total care of a patient with serious chronic or terminal illness is not an easy, short-term project. It is most often a profound emotional and physical experience. The sick person and the family usually welcome regular emotional and spiritual support.

Giving respite to those who care for the chronically or terminally ill can allow them to regain their strength and coping skills. The length of such care depends upon individual circumstances; even an hour or two can make a great difference to an overburdened family.

The mother who cannot spend needed time with a teenage daughter because of the demands of caring for a grandmother who has had a stroke, the family that feels guilty because it expresses the desire to be away from the problem for a little while, the parents who are too fatigued to care properly for their little ones, the mother who spends so much time with a handicapped child that other children in the family feel (and sometimes are) neglected—all need loving support and relief from overwhelming responsibilities.

Helping others through a time of special challenge requires understanding and patience. People respond to grief in different ways. Not everyone recovers in the same period of time, and not everyone acts the same. The griever might be irritable, depressed, quiet, or withdrawn, but through kindness and friendship, he or she will almost always recover and will come to acceptance.

A testimony of the reality of Jesus Christ and of his resurrection is the knowledge that sustains and comforts in times of trial. This assurance guides those bowed down with grief out of the shadow and into the light. This knowledge we can share with one another: "I know that my Redeemer lives. What comfort this sweet sentence gives!" ("I Know That My Redeemer Lives," *Hymns*, no. 136).

Being sensitive to such needs helps everyone find joy in the precious reality of everyday living and look forward with faith to the future, knowing that sorrow and struggle and endurance to the end are necessary parts of mortality.

### Being sensitive to special problems

It is said that love is tested and proved in the fire of suffering and adversity. How sensitive we should be to those who are suffering or hurting, to those with special problems—the sister who has had a miscarriage or a stillbirth, a premature or handicapped child; the one whose beloved husband has died; the lovely woman to whom marriage and family have not yet come; the new convert whose family has rejected her because of her baptism.

What we do or say is not as important as that we do or say something—"I care about you," or "Let me help." Where love is, heart will respond to heart and burdens will be lightened.

We must never feel that we have done our share or had our turn. I love something Dag Hammarskjöld once said when he was secretary general of the United Nations: "You have not done enough, you have never done enough as long as there is something more that you can contribute" (in Richard L. Evans, Jr., *Richard L. Evans—The Man and the*

*Message* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973], p. 256).

### Pouring down your calm light

For those among us who, for some reason, such as age or health, cannot give the kind of service we've been discussing, we would say, as someone said: "Among the people whom we know, it is not necessarily those who, meteor-like, are ever on the rush after some visible charge and work to whom we owe the most. It is often the lives, like the stars, which simply pour down on us the calm light of their bright and faithful being, up to which we look and out of which we gather the deepest calm and courage. It is good to know that even when we can no longer do something for our fellowmen, we can still be something for them; to know, and this surely, that no man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, and good without the world's being better for that goodness."

Almost everyone can do or be something for someone else in need.

### Helping those whose faith is weak

Perhaps there are days or times when, faced with overwhelming problems, we want to believe. We may worry or fret or doubt, yet we want to believe. It is comforting to me to know that the Lord knew even that this would be so and gave us in the book of Mark a wonderful story of a distraught father who brought his son to the Savior to be healed of a condition which sounds perhaps like epilepsy (see 9:14–29).

Jesus said: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:23–24).

We can help each other, also, on our days of unbelief. We can strengthen and lift and bless those whose faith might be weak. As Alma said, "Even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you" (Alma 32:27). This is the planting of the seed of faith.

## On the right hand of the Lord

We must recognize that life is a precious gift (Florence Nightingale called it a "splendid gift"), that trust and tenderness are fragile, that we must love and serve one another, must encourage one another, forgive one another—all this not once, but over and over again. Then perhaps we shall be remembered among those on the right hand of the Lord when he shall come in his glory.

"Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer . . . , Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these

my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:37–40).

That we may do so, brothers and sisters, each of us, as we have the opportunity, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Monson

Excellent instruction and a sweet spirit. We have just heard from Sister Joy F. Evans, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

---

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

---

## Elder Royden G. Derrick

### The way to perfection

In October of 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in which the Lord said, "I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness" (D&C 100:16). The Lord was speaking of our pioneer forefathers, and also of the Saints of this day. In view of that implied responsibility, I would like to discuss with you today the way to perfection, which not only applies to this life but to the next one as well.

A fortnight ago I received an interesting letter from a member of the Church who grew up in a country located high in the Himalaya Mountains of southern Asia. He wrote: "I was brought up in a royal, aristocratic, Hindu priest family. I was taught to work but not to hope for a reward. I thought, Why should I work if there is no reward? Am I following the right way? I was offended with polytheistic and pantheistic philosophy. I wanted to know the *real* truth and the [right] way." He told how he had found the truth and the only right way through

the Mormon missionaries in Seoul, Korea. He bore a powerful testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ that brought tears to my eyes.

I was intrigued by his statement concerning the need for a reward. The Lord has promised us resurrection and immortality, but these are not a reward. According to Webster's dictionary, a reward is "something that is given for some service or attainment."

Resurrection is the reuniting of the body and the spirit. As Jesus was resurrected, eventually every person who was ever born into this world will be resurrected, whether he wants to be or not. When a person is resurrected, he receives immortality, which is to live forever in the resurrected state. Likewise, every person who was ever born into this world will receive immortality regardless of his or her behavior in this life. Thus, *resurrection* and *immortality* are synonymous. They are not a reward—they are a gift—for we have rendered no service nor attained any accomplishment to warrant

these as a reward. The gift is from the Savior; it comes through His atoning sacrifice.

The scriptures teach us that there *is* promise beyond—that there *is* a reward for service rendered and for attainment. The reward is exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God. Exaltation is the highest of three degrees of glory in the celestial kingdom. The celestial kingdom is the highest of three kingdoms in the realm of immortality. Exaltation is earned by accepting Jesus Christ and His divine sonship and following His precepts.

### The Beatitudes: steps for coming to Christ

Jesus showed us the way. Its simplicity is encompassed in His Beatitudes, which have echoed down through the centuries of time and will yet echo through the millennia of time: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). In repeating the Sermon on the Mount to the people in ancient America, He said it differently: "Blessed are the poor in spirit *who come unto me*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (3 Nephi 12:3; italics added). This addition, "*who come unto me*," enables one to better understand the meaning of this verse. The Lord said he is angered with the inhabitants of the earth, for "they seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god" (D&C 1:16). The Beatitudes are steps we can take to come to Christ.

**Step 1.** To come unto Christ, one's first step is to come forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit that results in overcoming unrighteous pride and becoming submissive to His will.

**Step 2.** "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). The Apostle Paul spoke of a godly sorrow for our sins that is essential to our spiritual progress.

**Step 3.** "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). The dictionary defines *meek* as "enduring injury with patience and without resentment." This is an important virtue that one must develop in preparation for

entrance into the celestial kingdom, which kingdom the earth will become when it is celestialized.

**Step 4.** "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). The scripture from ancient America adds, "shall be filled with the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 12:6).

A young man approached Socrates and asked him to be his tutor and to teach him what he knew. Socrates took the young man to the seaside and out into the water. Then he pushed his head under the water for almost too long. The young man struggled, came up gasping for air, and demanded the meaning of such an unwarranted action. The great Socrates responded, "When you want to learn as badly as you want a breath of air, only then can I teach you what you want to know." To understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, one must first have a strong desire to learn and a willingness to study.

**Step 5.** "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). Webster's dictionary defines *mercy* as "compassion or forbearance shown to an offender." Such is the by-product of gospel living.

**Step 6.** When one extends mercy to others, he develops purity of heart. The Savior said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). The dictionary has twenty-two different definitions for the word *see*, one of which is "to understand." When one develops purity of heart, he will come to understand God. As one develops an understanding of God, he comes to know Him. The Savior said, addressing the Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

**Step 7.** Once one has gained purity of heart, he receives peace in his mind and peace in his heart. The Savior continued, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Having gained inner peace, we have put on the full armor of God. Now we can more easily withstand persecution, which leads to—

*Step 8.* "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:10–12).

The Savior concluded His sermon by encouraging us to become perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect. While these steps follow one another in a natural sequence, we should always be striving to perfect ourselves in each of these virtues. We should always help others as they strive to improve. Disparagement of others should not exist within our ranks, for each of us is struggling to move forward. A helping hand should be extended to lift one another over the shoals along the rocky shore near which our ship must sail.

## Repentance and the sacrament

In our state of imperfection, sin often occurs. The Lord has told us that if we truly repent, He will forgive us. Repentance involves recognition of our imperfections, remorse for having strayed, restitution where appropriate, and resolve that the transgression will never be repeated.

It is important that we partake of the sacrament regularly. When we do so, in sincere repentance, our baptismal covenants are renewed, the Lord forgives us, and we start anew. It is truly a marvelous and a merciful process, one which enables us to grow and progress.

## "Tried in all things"

When we partake of the sacrament, we witness unto God that we are willing to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ (see D&C 20:77). What does that mean?

The Savior said to Peter, "Come, follow me" (see Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17). Peter walked in His footsteps for

three years. He went where Jesus went. He did what Jesus instructed him to do. Then the Savior said to Peter and to His other Apostles also:

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2–3).

And where did Jesus go? He went to His Father. But before He went to His Father, He went someplace else. He went to Gethsemane. We are not required to go through His trials, but we are required to be *willing* to go through them. To prove that we are willing to do so, we must go through our own trials and remain faithful.

The Lord said, "My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom" (D&C 136:31).

## Strive for perfection

At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in the Holy Land, the Savior said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). But when the Savior repeated the Sermon on the Mount to the people of ancient America, He said, "Therefore I would that ye should be perfect *even as I*, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48; italics added).

Something important occurred between the time He taught this sermon to the people in the Holy Land and when He taught it to the people of ancient America. In the meantime, He went through His Gethsemane, where He drank the bitter cup and did not shrink. We too should strive for perfection, bear up under our problems and our sorrows, remain faithful to the end, and not shrink.

My friend from the Himalayas will have his trials and tribulations as he returns to his homeland to share this important message with his people: that Jesus

Christ is our Redeemer and our Savior and our Exemplar who will direct them along the right path that leads to exaltation; that there *is* a reward, but it *must be earned*; and that the reward is glorious beyond description. He tasted of that reward when he asked the Lord, "Is it true?" and the Holy spirit bore witness to him that truly it is.

I testify that this restored gospel which we espouse is indeed the real truth and the *right* way to a glorious and eternal

reward. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

## Elder M. Russell Ballard

This has been another wonderful conference, brothers and sisters. I am sure we all appreciate the inspired and timely messages we have heard. They have been translated simultaneously into twenty-nine languages, many of which have been broadcast via satellite and television to millions of people.

### Benefits and challenges of television

The wonder of television causes me to believe that Philo T. Farnsworth, back in 1927, must surely have been inspired of the Lord to develop this remarkable medium of communication. As you know, Brother Farnsworth was a member of the Church. Applying his scientific skills, he brought to the world this marvelous invention, which I believe is to be used for the primary purpose of furthering the work of the Lord.

In the past sixty years, television has become a major industry in the world. It is estimated that more than 750 million television sets are owned by people living in 160 countries. Approximately 2.5 billion people view television broadcasting every day.

Most of us recognize both the many benefits and the many challenges that come from television in our modern, fast-paced world. Some of the benefits, besides listening to the teaching of the gospel, we can receive by merely touching a button include receiving instant reports of local and world events and

updates on weather; watching fantasy; exploring geography; living history; enjoying good theater, dance, and music; and experiencing culture from almost every country in the world.

For these kinds of programs we praise the industry. Unfortunately, however, far too much programming is not wholesome and uplifting but is violent, degrading, and destructive to moral values. This kind of television offends the Spirit of the Lord; therefore, I express a word of warning and caution about such programming.

### Controlling the use of television

Good families face very significant challenges in controlling the use of television and videotapes in their homes. I agree with Dr. Victor B. Cline when he said, "I am convinced by a vast amount of research that the images, fantasies, and models which we are repeatedly exposed to in advertisements, entertainment, novels, motion pictures, and other works of art can and do . . . affect the self-image and, later, the behavior of nearly all young people and adults too" (address at Tidewater Assembly on Family Life, Norfolk, Virginia).

On another occasion, Dr. Cline said that the mental diet is as important as the nutritional diet. "The amount of violence a child sees at 7 predicts how violent he will be at 17, 27 and 37. . . . Children's minds are like banks—whatever you put

in, you get back 10 years later with interest." He said that violent television teaches children, step-by-step, "how to commit violent acts, and it desensitizes them to the horror of such behavior and to the feelings of victims." Dr. Cline said that America is suffering from "an explosion of interpersonal violence like we have never seen before. . . . The violence is because of violence in our entertainment" ("Therapist Says Children Who View TV Violence Tend to Become Violent," *Deseret News*, 24 Mar. 1989, sec. B, p. 2).

### Television now establishes values

Some may be surprised to know that in the average American home, the television set is on just under seven hours each day, and more than sixty-six million Americans who are under age nineteen live in these homes. A recent magazine article included this statement: "Once, television's 'window on the world' mirrored solid *family ties*, heroes drawn in bright primary colors, and a society of permanence and belonging. Now, . . . it's clear that our TV shows are showing quite a different picture. In fact, it's arguable that television is no longer a mere window on our world but the *value-setter itself*" (*Another View of the Window* [Triangle Publications, n.d.], p. 3).

### Detrimental effects of television

Allow me to share highlights of some alarming findings from research studies conducted over the past eight to ten years on the effects of television when watched more than two hours a day *without* the careful selection of programs.

1. Before television, children played together more often, played outdoors more, spent more time being creative and inventive, and read more. Parents and children spent more time together, talked together more, shared more joint projects and chores, and ate more meals together. (See Ellen B. De Franco, *TV On-Off: Better Family Use of Television* [Santa Monica, Calif., Goodyear Publishing Co., 1980], pp. 5-6.)

2. Television is psychologically addictive (see *TV On-Off*, p. 4).

3. Television is a *physically* passive activity and generally discourages creative play. It can encourage a certain kind of passivity which leads to a "show me or entertain me" orientation by children. (See *Television and Behavior* [Rockville, Md.: National Institute of Mental Health, 1987], pp. 45-46.)

4. Television tends to overpower and desensitize a child's sense of sympathy for suffering (see Kate Moody, *Growing Up on Television: The TV Effect—A Report to Parents* [New York: Times Books, 1980], pp. 91-92).

5. Some children lose the ability to learn from reality because life's experiences are more complicated than those seen on the screen. Teachers and parents, therefore, suffer by comparison when they cannot solve problems in thirty to sixty minutes. (See Ben Logan and Kate Moody, eds., *Television Awareness Training: The Viewer's Guide for Family and Community* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1979], p. 43.)

### Pornography and violence in the media

Volumes of research data show the detrimental effects of television, but I just say that television and videocassette viewing by youngsters has a significant impact on their behavior. We must not take lightly the confession of a recently executed killer on the impact pornography and violence in media had on his life. The Apostle Paul warned that men can become "past feeling . . . [giving] themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19). In Proverbs we read, "As [a man] thinketh . . . , so is he" (23:7). A mind exposed to violence and immorality cannot escape the negative impact of such exposure.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "A survey of influential television writers and executives in Hollywood has shown that they are far less religious than the general public. . . . While nearly all of the 104 Hollywood professionals inter-

viewed had a religious background, 45 percent now say they have no religion, and of the other 55 percent only 7 percent say they attend a religious service as much as once a month.

"This group has had a major role in shaping the shows whose themes and stars have become staples in our popular culture" (*Los Angeles Times*, 19 Feb. 1983, part 2, page 5).

"These are the people [TV script writers and executives] who, through the medium of entertainment, are educating us in the direction of their own standards, which in many cases are diametrically opposed to the standards of the gospel" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, p. 67; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, pp. 45-46).

A *Time* magazine article states:

"This upsurge in openness has been linked by some critics to cutbacks in the network departments of standards and practices—the censors who review shows and commercials for offensive . . . material. . . . The ranks of these watchdogs were drastically reduced: from a peak of 75 to 80 per network during the 1970s to 35 to 40 today at ABC and fewer than 30 each at CBS and NBC" ("Where Are the Censors?" 12 Dec. 1988, p. 95). Televised violence has become so pervasive that the average high school student by graduation has seen eighteen thousand murders and many other acts of violence and sin. This being the case today, more parental review and monitoring is needed to protect our families from the current flood of TV violence and the effect it has on us.

Randal A. Wright in his book *Families in Danger* wrote:

"It is possible to trace the decline in American television from its original programs. As an example, a prime-time (7:00 to 10:00 P.M.) schedule check going back thirty years found that in 1955, no violent, crime-oriented programs were offered. . . . By 1986, twenty-nine hours of violent programs were being offered" ([Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], pp. 45-46).

I believe that the number of violent programs has increased substantially since 1986.

Mr. Wright continued: "Not only is violence increasing on TV, but every form of immorality, vice, and corruption is also being paraded before our family's eyes in ever-increasing amounts. Ask yourself if the same kinds of sexually related scenes and messages of all too many programs of today were found in the programs of twenty years ago. We are being exposed to growing amounts of inappropriate material if we choose to watch TV without being selective" (*Families in Danger*, p. 46).

### Be in the world but not of it

In the Church, we often state the couplet, "Be in the world but not of the world." As we observe television shows that make profanity, violence, and infidelity commonplace and even glamorous, we often wish we could lock out the world in some way and isolate our families from it all.

Perhaps the proper response to outrageous behavior is outrage, or, more to the point, the proper response to outrageous television is outrage. I express my own and this church's disappointment, disagreement, and even outrage with television that turns our attention and sometimes our inclinations toward violence, self-serving greed, profanity, disrespect for traditional values, sexual promiscuity, and deviance.

Nephi predicted that in our day Satan would "rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good" (2 Nephi 28:20). Satan's evil use of television contributes to the increased wickedness in our society.

Perhaps we should state the couplet previously mentioned as two separate admonitions. First, "*Be in the world.*" Be involved; be informed. Try to be understanding and tolerant and to appreciate diversity. Make meaningful contributions to society through service and involvement. Second, "*Be not of the world.*" Do not follow wrong paths or bend to accommodate or accept what is not right.



We should strive to change the corrupt and immoral tendencies in television and in society by keeping things that offend and debase *out* of our homes. In spite of all of the wickedness in the world, and in spite of all the opposition to good that we find on every hand, we should *not* try to take ourselves or our children *out* of the world. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven," or yeast (Matthew 13:33). We are to lift the world and help all to rise above the wickedness that surrounds us. The Savior prayed to the Father:

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15).

Members of the Church need to influence more than we are influenced. We should work to stem the tide of sin and evil instead of passively being swept along by it. We each need to help solve the problem rather than avoid or ignore it. I like this simple little poem:

All the water in the world  
No matter how it tried  
Could never sink the smallest ship  
Unless it got inside.  
All the evil of the world  
And every kind of sin  
Could never damn a human soul  
Unless we let it in.

We can live in the world, brothers and sisters, without letting the world into us. We have the gospel message that can carry men and women buoyantly through the "mist of darkness" (1 Nephi 8:23) to the source of all light. We can raise children who have been taught to discern and to make personal righteous decisions.

The Lord does not need a society that hides and isolates itself from the world. Rather, he needs stalwart individuals and families who live exemplary lives *in* the world and demonstrate that joy and fulfillment come not of the world but through the spirit and the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

## Reversing negative trends of television

Now, what can we as individuals and families do to reverse the negative trends of television? Let me review with you some suggestions.

Research data indicates that families that limit television viewing to a *maximum* of two hours a day of *carefully selected* programs may see the following significant changes in family relationships:

1. Value setting will be taught and reinforced by the family. Families will learn how to establish values and how to reason together.

2. Relationships between parents and youth will increase in families.

3. Homework will be completed with less pressure of time.

4. Personal conversations will increase substantially.

5. Children's imaginations will come back to life.

6. Each family member will become a discriminating selector and evaluator of programs.

7. Parents can become family leaders again.

8. Good reading habits may be substituted for television viewing.

Brothers and sisters, we can write to local radio and television stations and to cable and national networks to express our concerns. The sponsors and advertisers who pay for programs and advertising that are offensive would most likely appreciate hearing from us also.

In my opinion, we must make our influence felt by joining with other concerned people who oppose television programming that tears down and destroys the *values* that have made our families and our countries strong. Latter-day Saints are not alone in this concern. Many individuals, churches, and other organizations are raising their voices. Let us join with them, brothers and sisters, to persuade TV script writers, executives, and sponsors to use their talents and resources to help build a better and safer world.

President George Bush, in his inaugural address, called for a kinder face of the nation and a gentler face of the world (see *Investor's Daily*, 23 Jan. 1989, p. 11). Let it begin by a kinder and gentler television throughout the world.

### A simple test

The prophet Mormon said that each of us is given the Spirit of Christ to know good from evil; everything that invites us to do good is of God. On the other hand, anything that persuades us to do evil is of the devil, for he and those who follow him persuade no one to do good. (See Moroni 7:16–18.) This simple test will guide us in judging television and other media programs.

May the Lord bless us and help us protect ourselves, our families, and the spirit of our homes, and help us improve our world through working for improved television programming.

I leave you my testimony that we have only one sure way to secure our homes and our families, and that is through learning and living the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless you and help you prevent anything of an evil nature from entering your homes, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

(Read by President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency)

My dear brethren and sisters, how I have rejoiced in the messages I have heard delivered from this pulpit at this great general conference of the Church.

The messages are true. They are important. They are vital to our personal

Before hearing President Benson's concluding remarks, we express our sincere appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus, Brigham Young University combined choirs, Ricks College centennial priesthood choir, and the Tabernacle Choir and to their conductors and their organists for the beautiful and inspiring music during this conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given the conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and the interpreters.

We express appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage of the conference and to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems who have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to the closing remarks of President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet, which he has asked me to read. Following the presentation of his message, we shall see a delightful video clip of President Benson singing to the youth whom he loves.

Following these remarks, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "I Am a Child of God." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Waldo P. Call of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, and then this conference will stand adjourned for six months.

salvation, and with all my heart I commend them to you.

### To the children of the Church

In previous general meetings of the Church, I have spoken specifically to the mothers and to the fathers, to the young men and to the young women, to the single adult sisters and to the single adult brethren.

For my closing message at this conference, I would now like to speak to the children of the Church — yes, to *you*, our precious children. And as you listen, I pray that you will know that this is a personal message just for you.

How I love you! How our Heavenly Father loves you!

Just like the beautiful Primary song you sing, each of you truly *is* a child of God. For you, rich blessings *are* in store, and if you learn to do His will, you *will* live with Him once more. I know this to be true. (See “I Am a Child of God,” *Hymns*, no. 301.)

Today I desire to teach you what our Heavenly Father wants you to know so that you can learn to do His will and enjoy true happiness. It will help you now and throughout your life.

### Read the Book of Mormon

First, may I say how thrilled I am to know how you children are learning about the Book of Mormon. This is one of the very important things Heavenly Father wants you to do.

I know you are reading the Book of Mormon, for I have received hundreds of personal letters from you telling me that you are reading this sacred book. It makes me weep for joy when I hear this.

Many of you have read the Book of Mormon all the way through. In family home evening and in Primary you have dramatized Book of Mormon stories, you have sung songs about the Book of Mormon, you have learned the names of the books in the Book of Mormon, you have played Book of Mormon games, you have learned about wonderful Book of Mormon prophets. Some of you have even earned money to send copies of the Book of Mormon around the world.

How pleased I am to hear of your love for the Book of Mormon. *I* love it too, and Heavenly Father wants you to continue to learn from the Book of Mormon every day. It's Heavenly Father's special gift to you. By following its teachings, you will learn to do the will of our Father in Heaven.

I also hope your parents and leaders will give you opportunities to learn from the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible as well.

### Pray every day

Now, there are other important things Heavenly Father wants you to do.

He wants you to pray to Him every day. He wants to help you because He loves you, and He *will* help you if you pray to Him and ask Him for His help. In your prayers, also thank Him for your blessings. Thank Him for sending our oldest brother, Jesus Christ, into the world. He made it possible for us to return to our heavenly home. Thank Him for your family. Thank Him for the Church. Thank Him for this beautiful world you live in. Ask Him to protect you. In your prayers, ask Him to help you know what to do in your life. When you make mistakes, your Heavenly Father still loves you. So pray to Him, and He will help you try again to do right.

Pray to Heavenly Father to bless you with His Spirit at all times. We often call the Spirit the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is also a gift from Heavenly Father. The Holy Ghost helps you to choose the right. The Holy Ghost will protect you from evil. He whispers to you in a still, small voice to do right. When you *do* good, you *feel* good, and that is the Holy Ghost speaking to you. The Holy Ghost is a wonderful companion. He is *always* there to help you.

### Be a true Latter-day Saint

My dear boys and girls, honor your fathers and mothers. They will help you make good decisions. Enjoy and respect your grandparents. Be a real friend to your brothers and sisters. Choose friends who have high ideals. Choose friends who will help you to be good.

Attend sacrament meeting. Listen carefully to what your bishop says. He is an important spiritual leader who has a special calling from Heavenly Father to help you.

Enjoy Primary, and attend every week. Bring your member and non-member friends to Primary. Learn the Primary songs well. They are wonderful. Memorize the Articles of Faith and earn the Gospel in Action Award.

Be honest. Do not lie nor steal. Do not cheat. Do not use profanity, but be clean in your thoughts and speech.

Be a *true* Latter-day Saint. Stand up for your beliefs. One of my favorite Primary songs is "Dare to Do Right." Some of the words are:

Dare to do right! dare to be true!  
You have a work that no other can  
do;  
Do it so bravely, so kindly, so well,  
Angels will hasten the story to tell.  
(*Sing with Me*, B-81)

Remember, Satan does not want you to be happy. He does not want you to dare to do right. He wants you to be miserable, as he is. He has captured the hearts of wicked men and women who would have you participate in bad things such as pornography, drugs, profanity, and immorality. Stay away from these evils. Avoid books, magazines, videos, movies, and television shows that are not good. As the scriptures tell us, avoid the very *appearance* of evil (see 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Dress modestly. Choose clothing that covers your body properly. Behave in a courteous and polite way. Live the Word of Wisdom. Keep the Sabbath day holy. Listen to good music. Do your best to be good.

Do well in your school work and strive to be a good student.

With help from your parents, begin your own library of favorite tapes, books, and pictures which are available at Church distribution centers. Enjoy reading each month in your home the *Friend* magazine or the international magazines.

Love the country in which you live. Be a good citizen. Be patriotic. Fly your country's flag on special holidays. Pray for your country's leaders.

Primary boys, plan and look forward to serving a full-time mission for the Lord. Young girls, be prepared for mis-

sionary service if you are called. But also, young girls, learn from your mothers the important homemaking skills you will use in your own home.

### To children who do not feel safe

Now I want to say something to you children who do not feel safe and who are frightened or hurt and do not know what to do. Sometimes you may feel all alone. You need to know that even when it seems that no one else cares, your Heavenly Father does. He will always love you. He wants you to be protected and safe. If you are not, please talk to someone who can help you—a parent, a teacher, your bishop, or a friend. They will help you.

### Angels will minister unto you

I am sure each of you has favorite stories from the scriptures. One of my favorite stories is found in the seventeenth chapter of 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon. It tells about the visit of Jesus to the people on the American continent after His resurrection. It tells about Jesus healing the sick and teaching the people and praying to Heavenly Father for them.

Now, this is one of my favorite parts of that story:

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome.

"And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them, and bade them arise.

"And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

"And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

"And when he had done this he wept again;

"And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

"And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them" (3 Nephi 17:18-24).

I promise you, dear children, that angels will minister unto you also. You may not see them, but they will be there to help you, and you will feel of their presence.

Favored little ones were they,  
Who towards him Jesus drew!  
Who within his arms he took  
Just as loving parents do,  
Christ the Lord "Our living head."  
This of little children said,  
"Such shall of my kingdom be,  
Suffer them to come to me."  
Listen to the Savior's plea,  
"Let the children come to me."  
("Let the Little Children Come,"  
*Sing with Me*, B-14)

### Walk in the light

Dear children, our Heavenly Father sent you to earth at this time because you are some of His most valiant children. He knew there would be much wickedness in the world today, and He knew you could be faithful and obedient.

Dear child, you are God's gift to your parents, and the gift your parents can give God is to bring you back to Him sweet and pure and faithful.

He expects your parents and leaders to teach you, to walk beside you, and to be shining examples to you so that you will know the way you should go. They must spend time with you and love you and pray *with* you and *for* you.

Your leaders must call faithful men and women to teach you in Primary. We must provide experiences for you early in your life that will help you know how to live the gospel.

God bless the children of this Church. How I love you! How Heavenly Father loves you! And may we, as your parents, teachers, and leaders, be *more* childlike — more submissive, more meek, and more humble.

I close my message to you this day with the prayer that we may ever respond to your plea as *you* so sweetly sing,

Teach me to walk in the light of his  
love;  
Teach me to pray to my Father  
above;  
Teach me to know of the things that  
are right;  
Teach me, teach me to walk in the  
light.

And then, as your parents, we sing to you,

Come, little child, and together we'll  
learn  
Of his commandments, that we may  
return  
Home to his presence, to live in his  
sight —  
Always, always to walk in the light.

And *together* we sing:

Father in Heaven, we thank thee this  
day  
For loving guidance to show us the  
way.  
Grateful, we praise thee with songs  
of delight!  
Gladly, gladly we'll walk in the light.  
("Teach Me to Walk in the Light,"  
*Hymns*, no. 304)

For this I fervently pray for the children of the Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

A video presentation was shown of President Benson singing "I Am a Mormon Boy" to a group of children.

The choir sang "I Am a Child of God."

Elder Waldo P. Call offered the benediction.

## SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Brigham Young University combined choirs, conducted by Ronald J. Staheli and Mack Wilberg.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by the Ricks College centennial priesthood choir. Richard

Robison and Mike Belnap conducted the choir.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

**F. Michael Watson**  
Clerk of the conference

# INDEX

## A

<b>Ashton, Elder Marvin J.</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Judging ourselves as unworthy; Understanding what worthiness is; Overcoming feelings of inadequacy; Destructive misconceptions and comparisons; We are of great worth to God; Interviews with priesthood leaders; The need to be chastised; Seeking help to become worthy; "I Would Be Worthy"	
<b>Authorities Present, General</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Authorities Present, Other</b> .....	<b>2</b>

## B

<b>Ballard, Elder M. Russell</b> .....	<b>98</b>
Benefits and challenges of television; Controlling the use of television; Television now establishes values; Detrimental effects of television; Pornography and violence in the media; Be in the world but not of it; Reversing negative trends of television; A simple test	
<b>Benson, President Ezra Taft (Fifth Session)</b> .....	<b>102</b>
To the children of the Church; Read the Book of Mormon; Pray every day; Be a true Latter-day Saint; To children who do not feel safe; Angels will minister unto you; Walk in the light	
<b>Benson, President Ezra Taft (First Session)</b> .....	<b>3</b>
The sin of pride; "Beware of pride"; God's definition of <i>pride</i> ; Enmity toward God; Enmity toward fellowmen; Consequences of pride; Manifestations of pride; "A damning sin"; The cost of pride; The universal sin; Humility: the antidote for pride; Choose to be humble; The great stumbling block to Zion	
<b>Benson, President Ezra Taft, Presentation of Scouting Award to</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>Busche, Elder F. Enzo</b> .....	<b>89</b>
Temple service awakens the soul; The university for eternal life; Wickedness never was happiness; An essential awareness; Study scriptures to gain awareness; Become our own judges; Understanding gained in the temple	

## C

<b>Clarke, Elder J. Richard</b> .....	<b>73</b>
Importance of family history work; Families of heaven; The kindred family; Society's most important institution; The priesthood solidifies families; Single-parent families; Joys of family history work; In partnership with God	
<b>Church Audit Committee Report for 1988</b> .....	<b>23</b>

**Church Authorities and Officers, Sustaining of** ..... 22

**Church Statistical Report for 1988**..... 24

**Conference Music, Summary of** ..... 106

**D**

**Derrick, Elder Royden G.** ..... 95

    The way to perfection; The Beatitudes: steps for coming to Christ;  
    Repentance and sacrament; “Tried in all things”; Strive for perfection

**E**

**Evans, Sister Joy F.** ..... 91

    Ministering to the sick and needy; Relief Society service; Reaching out in  
    love; Responding to chronic and terminal illness; Being sensitive to special  
    problems; Pouring down your calm light; Helping those whose faith is  
    weak; On the right hand of the Lord

**F**

**Faust, Elder James E.** ..... 39

    The comforter; The Spirit of God; The gift of the Holy Ghost; A sure  
    compass; Evil is often accepted gradually; The Holy Ghost can strengthen  
    us; The Comforter brings peace; A confirming witness; The Holy Ghost’s  
    sealing power; “I will not leave you comfortless”; Joseph’s counsel to  
    Brigham Young; A constant companion

**Fifth Session** ..... 84

**First Day, Afternoon Session** ..... 21

**First Day, Morning Session**..... 2

**First Session** ..... 2

**Fourth Session** ..... 64

**G**

**General Authorities Present** ..... 1

**General Authorities, Sustaining of**..... 22

**General Priesthood Session**..... 43

**Groberg, Elder John H.** ..... 49

    Come unto Christ through the sacrament; Partake of the sacrament  
    worthily; Blessings of partaking worthily; Repent to become worthy;  
    Becoming a people pure in heart; Responsibilities of priesthood bearers;  
    Emblems of the Lord’s love



## H

- Hinckley, President Gordon B. (Fourth Session) ..... 80**  
 Expression of optimism; Church growth since 1981; Love is like the lodestar; God's great love for us; Love and help the poor; Serve through temple work; Reach out to the distressed; Love and forgive enemies; Strengthen family love; Love never faileth
- Hinckley, President Gordon B. (Priesthood Session)..... 60**  
 Reflection on Scout meetings; Pledge to magnify the priesthood; A comparison to binoculars; Lift, strengthen, serve, and give; Teach the word of God; Experiences of Oliver Cowdery; The Lord's promises; Teach true and sound doctrine; Serve with diligence and enthusiasm; Reach out and give strength; Walk in honesty and virtue; Work from the godly perspective
- Hunter, President Howard W. .... 18**  
 The miracle of springtime; The God that doest wonders; Recognize everyday miracles; Do not deny miracles; Jesus heals a blind man; Faith and miracles; Miracles have not ceased

## M

- Maxwell, Elder Neal A. .... 76**  
 Irony: the crust on the bread of adversity; The challenges of irony; Jesus' example of coping with irony; Instructive irony; Irony can strip corrosive pride; The grand and glad irony; Be more loving; Exercise self-denial; Live in thanksgiving; Do not heed temptations; Manage irony with meekness; Do the will of the Father; Glory be to the Father
- Monson, President Thomas S. (Fourth Session) ..... 65**  
 Ministry to the German Democratic Republic; Effects of World War II; Elder Benson's rescue mission; A prophetic promise; A special dedication of the land; The Freiberg Temple: a miracle; The need for missionaries; Permission granted for missionary work; Thanks be to God; God's purposes will not fail
- Monson, President Thomas S. (Priesthood Session)..... 55**  
 Great expectations; Remember from whence you came; Children of promise, men of might; Overcome the enemy of self-defeat; Choose the right; Importance of prayer; The commitment to serve; A modern miracle; Strive to attain eternal life
- Music, Summary of Conference ..... 106**
- N
- Nelson, Elder Russell M. .... 85**  
 The canker of contention; The creator of contention; The origin of contention; Targets of the adversary; The family; Leaders of the Church; Divine doctrine; Steps to supplant contention

## O

- Oaks, Elder Dallin H.** ..... 34  
 The voice of the Good Shepherd; Many alternate voices; The Church's position; Church members' relationship to alternate voices; Ways to acquire sacred knowledge; How to learn by faith; Seek sacred knowledge

## P

- Pace, Bishop Glenn L.** ..... 32  
 Criticism from nonmembers; Criticism from former members; Criticism from within the Church; Testimony of today's prophets
- Packer, Elder Boyd K.** ..... 70  
 Teenage wishes; A different world; The black knight; Of royal birth; The dark side; Forgiveness; The end of the world
- Perry, Elder L. Tom** ..... 15  
 Great potential for declaring the gospel; Every member a missionary; Reasons for reluctance; Our message about the purpose of life; Our message about eternal families; Our message about the Lord; Translation of the Book of Mormon; Prepare to teach the Book of Mormon; Approach those who need the gospel
- Pinnock, Elder Hugh W.** ..... 11  
 The age of blaming; Taking responsibility for ourselves; People who have taken responsibility; Four steps of taking responsibility; Personal initiative and inspiration
- Poelman, Elder Ronald E.** ..... 28  
 Adversity in the lives of the obedient; Values of adversity; Responding positively to adversity; Look to the Savior; Study the scriptures daily; Fulfill the baptismal covenant; Bear afflictions patiently; Blessings of positive responses to adversity; The trials of Alma and his people; "May Christ lift thee up"

- Presentation of Scouting Award to President Benson** ..... 44
- Priesthood Session, General** ..... 43

## S

- Scott, Elder Richard G.** ..... 45  
 Your spiritual flame; Trust the Lord to help resolve problems; Trust the Lord to protect you; Don't face the world alone; Repent and become clean; The dangers of selfishness; Build righteous character; Act with integrity; Be the leader in doing right; Follow the Spirit's promptings
- Second Day, Afternoon Session** ..... 84
- Second Day, Morning Session** ..... 64
- Second Session** ..... 21

<b>Summary of Conference Music .....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers .....</b>	<b>22</b>

# T

<b>Taylor, Elder Russell C. ....</b>	<b>52</b>
Making points for righteousness; Serve a mission; Draw close to the Lord; Live the Word of Wisdom; Stay morally clean; Live a life of service and Church activity; The Lord will help when we err	

<b>Third Session .....</b>	<b>43</b>
----------------------------	-----------

# W

<b>Wirthlin, Elder Joseph B. ....</b>	<b>7</b>
Thrive in the heat of adversity; Plant and nurture seeds of faith; Sow the seed of charity; Nourish the seed of harmony at home; Plant the seed of the work ethic; Take charge of teaching children; Do not rationalize sin; Counsel about television; Plant the seed of testimony; Testimony	



















THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY  
SAINTS